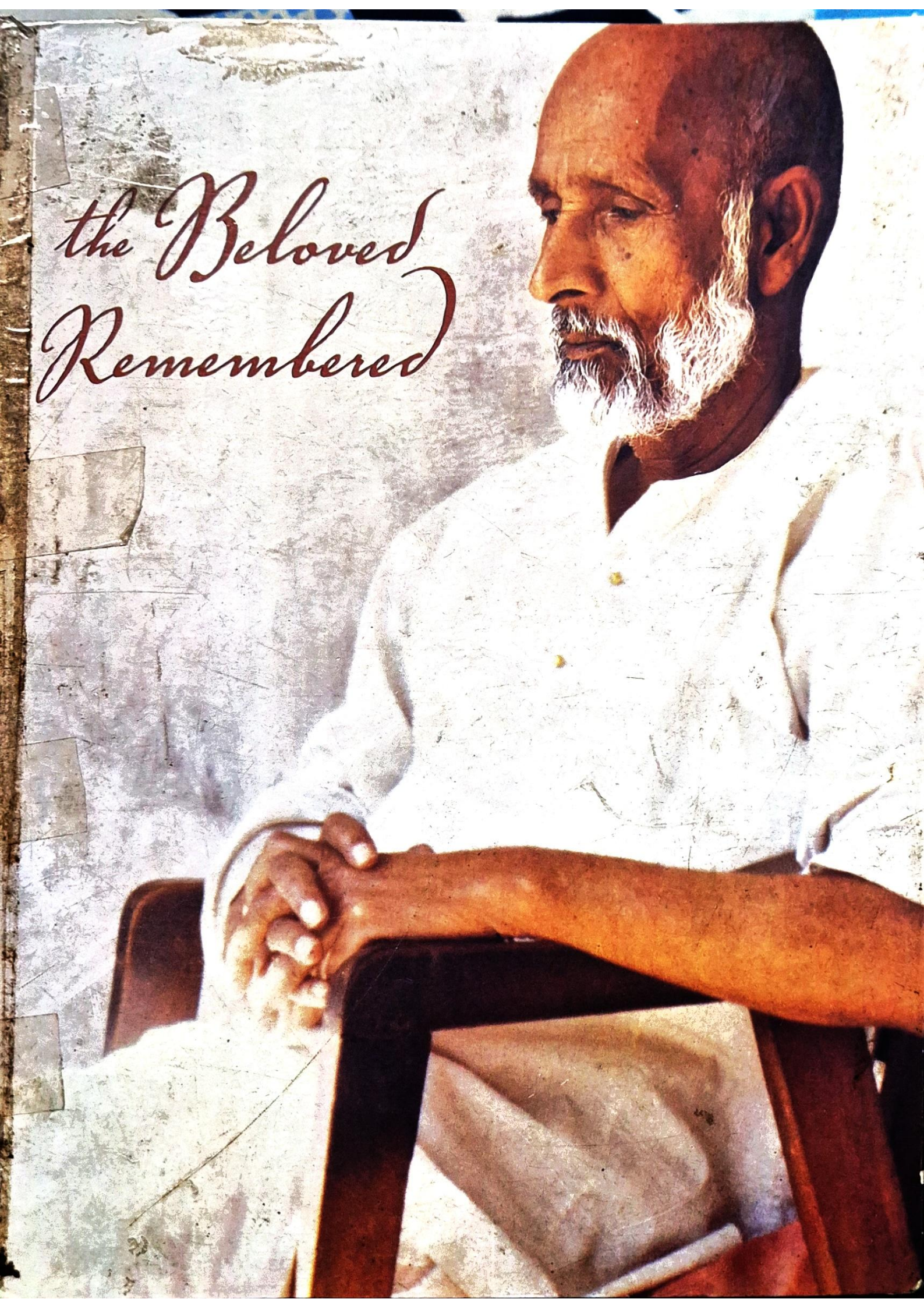
the Beloved Remembered



the Beloved Remembered

A Loving Tribute to
SHRI RAM CHANDRAJI MAHARAJ
on the Occasion of His Birth Centenary

April 30, 1999

Edited by June Levine

Shri Ram Chandra Mission

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Babuji Maharaj Birth Centenary Edition

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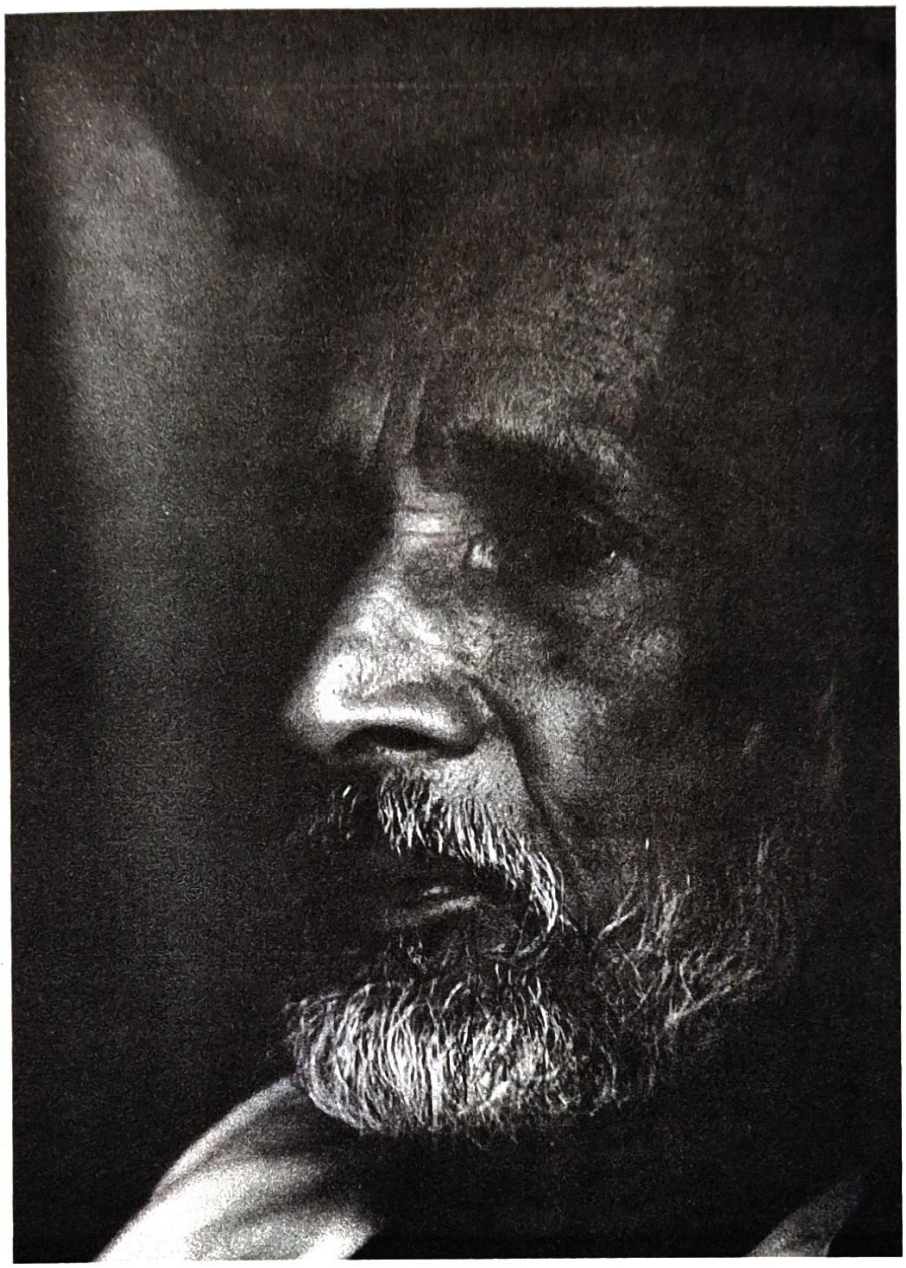
"Spirituality is a very easy thing, and its achievement does not take much time. One should only increase faith and devotion. And devotion is generated by remembering again and again."

Babuji



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Editor's Note

Inevitably, this book is about Love because what else could a book about Babuji Maharaj be. And how much humanity hungers for love was borne in on me as I read the efforts of abhyasis from all over the world struggling to express feelings in words often not of their mother tongues. Every voice in this book attempts to speak of the Love which was merely scented in the presence of Shri Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur.

Babuji Maharaj never judged, he had impeccable manners and was incredibly kind and generous of spirit. He also had a wonderful sense of humour. In those days I loved him for these human qualities. Now, I understand that any fool can be loving, all one has to do is treat everyone the way they want to be treated. He was not merely loving. He was Love, is Love, will always be Love, in answer to the soul's hunger for love. He offered us no less a service than to assist us in reaching the goal of life! And He gave us the unique opportunity to absorb Love, more than we had ever craved, with more than enough for every single soul and every thing, a truth I had not yet grasped as I sat basking in his presence

I wish that I had known Babuji Maharaj better in this life time, but I realise how fortunate I am to have known him at all! He knew **me**! A question he put to me came back repeatedly over the years and when he put it to me I got a jolt, "What do **you** want from me?" he asked. There was such emphasis on the 'you.'

I was sitting in a group around him, laughing, enjoying. Taken aback, the words came out of my mouth, "I want to be like you." He laughed and said, "That is not difficult." And I began my wondering about this question. Why did he ask it of **me**? What did it mean? What was he telling me? I came to know the answer through our living Master and even then, it dawned ever so slowly.

Babuji Maharaj gifted me that question as one might give a child something to occupy herself, keep her out of mischief. He knew that I had to think about it for, in truth, I did not know what I was doing in Shahjahanpur. I simply went with Ivor and enjoyed being with Babuji. He knew that I would have to be dragged along the path of spirituality by the hair of my head and that if I were ever to be firmly planted on this path, it would be in the future. That does not matter. It is not how long it takes to arrive at the railway station that counts, just that one is on the train.

The last time I saw Babuji Maharaj was in Paris in 1982. "Forget me not," he whispered so weakly that I have never been sure whether the words came through my ears or my heart. "Forget me not." It was his reply to my anguished, "Babuji, I wish I could do something for you." Lying so sick on that bed in Paris, in the care of his faithful Parthasarathi, his thoughts were still for us. And I knew that in that whisper his leaving had begun.

After leaving Babuji's bedside, with his words seeming to burn in my throat and sting my eyes, I lay down on my bed above his room and spent most of the rest of the time in Paris sick to the heart, feeling too ill to get up and reluctant to meet anyone.

At one level, Sahaj Marg works like any other group. There is the 'in' crowd and others. I certainly was not an 'in' person. For a start I had not grasped what Sahaj Marg was about and I felt vaguely irritated by the holiness of other abhyasis while resisting the belief that they were holy. And I could not get my spiritual act together so to speak.

I always had many questions, but whenever I was with Master I forgot them. For instance I could not see the sense in liberation. After all if I didn't remember my last life then I would not remember this one, so what? I had endured serious illness and other things and if life was going fine at last, then why court trouble by being so serious? It was years before I realised that there is only one way to solve what Babuji called "the problem of life".

In Paris, there were groups meeting and rumours coming back that sounded more political than spiritual. I understood the nature of power play for I had been involved in political action, but finding it in Sahaj Marg provided me with an excuse for resistance. Although I left the Mission

after His *mahasamadhi for* reasons that seem childish to me now, it was in answer to a prayer to Babuji that I came back and was welcomed so wholeheartedly by my Master.

Babuji must have known what was going on in Paris, the meetings, the exclusions, the forgetting that he was still with them even in body. An old man sick to death appears a helpless sight, but the physical condition of Babuji Maharaj was irrelevant to His work. Even I knew that. Such cleaning happened that week.

And then there was the plan to take Babuji to Manchester. His family wanted to take him from Paris to see a brother there whom he had not met in years. I was sitting in the garden when I heard that, "How?" I remember asking, outraged, "How can he go to Manchester? He is too ill." And in my heart I prayed hard, "Babuji, don't let them drag you to Manchester." And eventually came the news that he would be going straight home.

At the end of the seminar we sat out on the lawn waiting to take our leave of Babuji. Chariji had done him proud. Babuji looked touched by a mother's love, as though he had been got ready to visit his grandparents. From head to polished shoes he gleamed, immaculate in Nehru jacket and pristine white cap perched just so. He was simply beautiful.

A blonde child, about three years old, placed himself in front of Babuji and stared at him steadily. Babuji stared back, unsmiling as the child was unsmiling. This communication between Master and boy went on for ages, neither moving until it was time for Babuji to go. Forever, my heart's eye sees Babuji and the boy absorbed in innocence.

* * *

It was not possible to include everyone who wrote about Babuji Maharaj and I hope that abhyasis who were omitted for one reason or another will understand. I also did a bit of re-writing for the sake of clarity, especially when adapting talks. I hope this is all right.

Editing this book has been a wonder–full experience of Babuji for me, so much so that I am keeping it to myself for the time being. Suffice it to say that I was given the sort of effortless energy that I have not had for

thirty years. Throughout this play-like work, Babuji has been with me in my untidy little study and He even rendered me uncharacteristically philosophical during struggles with my aged computer.

I was never as close to Babuji during his life time as I have been during the past months as the result of which my heart knows so much more. And is still only beginning to know. As I write I recall Babuji's chuckle and know that I never really heard its essence before for now it is rich with the knowledge that, sooner or later, the nature of Love conquers all.

June Levine
Ireland, 1999

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The Beloved Remembered

Introduction

Spirituality is a journey back to the original home of each and every one of us. Only two can undertake this journey—the lover and the beloved. The great Indian poet-mystic, Kabir, has said in his well known couplet that the lovers' lane is so narrow that only one can walk on it. The lover is the abhyasi or, to put it in its true reality, the abhyasi must be a lover. The Master is the beloved. What Kabir says is that the lovers' lane is too narrow, even for two persons walking side by side. The two must merge into one to be able to walk on it. Otherwise the Master walks alone! Many walk the path with the Master, but few develop this relationship of lover and beloved, and hence the truth of that ancient statement: Many are called but few are chosen. Unfortunately, that statement gives the totally wrong, often tragic, sense that it is the Master who does the choosing. This is just not true, for it is the abhyasi who has to choose the master, and then to literally **rise in his love for Him!** I am averse to the customary phrase 'falling in love'. This may be true in the human situation, where merely human love is concerned. Tragically, it is true that often people do **fall** in love. Where the relationship with the Master of one's spiritual destiny is concerned, one can, and must **rise in love**.

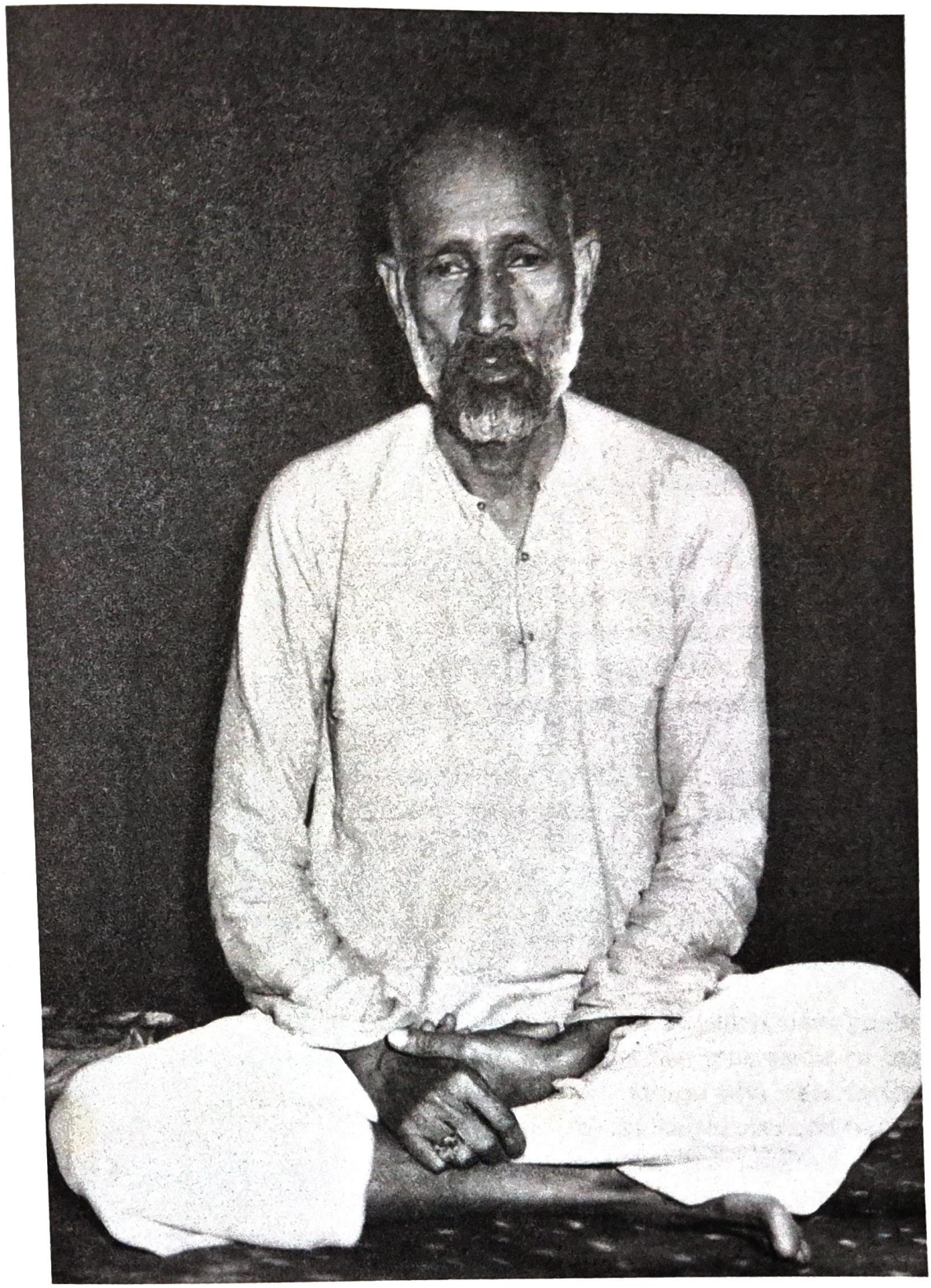
The abhyasi who cannot love the Master as his own life will never make the grade, even though he may be raised, by Master's mercy and grace, to the highest level of spiritual growth—the central region. Where the emphasis is on regions, rather than on the often-unperceived **Real Goal of Human Life**, the fruit of one's sadhana will be limited to what I would refer to as progress up a ladder to higher and higher regions. It is the Master himself who is the real goal of human life. If this be understood with the heart, for the mind or the intellect will rarely tolerate such a humanised concept, leave alone accept it, then love for the master grows in the heart. The true spiritual journey then commences, the two walking

together as lovers, not one in front with the other following, as must happen when the Master is merely the guide. They begin the walk up the lovers' lane as two separate persons. Then as the love of the abhyasi for the Master deepens, and engulfs his life, permeating the very core of his being, the miraculous event suddenly descends, from above, as it were, and where there were two, there is now only ONE. To the vulgar eye it might appear as if the Master walks alone, having abandoned his abhyasi somewhere along the way. The reality however is that the Master has felt the total love of the abhyasi for him, and allowed that to happen which is the true culmination of the spiritual journey—merger with himself, called *Layavastha*.

The abhyasis who have contributed their mite—or is it might—to this volume of reminiscences will surely reveal their own inner condition which will be mirrored in what they have written. If they read what they have themselves written, it will help them a great deal, for then their own writing will reveal to them what they have achieved on the Sahaj Marg lovers' walk, and what remains yet to be achieved. Sincere diary writing converts the diary into a mirror in which one can see one's self. This must be the function of all writings that claim seriousness of purpose.

May Master's love, which is ever present, find hearts open to welcome Him into the Master's home—the loving human heart! That, to my thinking, is the end of everything. A mysterious and incredible state of being comes into existence where the abhyasis exists within the Master's heart, and the Master is found residing happily in the abhyasi's heart. That is the heart of the spiritual mystery that is Sahaj Marg. That is the ultimate finality of the spiritual way. May such a condition be bestowed upon all those who love Him, for the Master's heart yearns longingly for a heart that has nothing but love for Him in it. May He bless all.

P. Rajagopalachari
Chennai, January 12, 1999



"Lalaji Used to Say..."

"Words of Wisdom" are sayings and writings of Babuji Maharaj remembering his beloved Master in the following extract from "Nudi Muttugalus." This Mission book was compiled by Br. S.A. Sarnadji from his experiences with Babuji and is not available in any other language except Kannada. This translation was submitted by B. Shrikar, Ahmedabad, India.

Lalaji lead a life of great difficulty on a limited salary. Time and again guests frequented his house and were served with delicious food. In those days drinking tea was not customary. Lalaji was not accustomed to drinking tea. He did not smoke either. Tea was served only to those guests who were in the habit of drinking tea. Lalaji used to occasionally drink a concoction made of tulsi leaves.

Once when I visited Lalaji's house, both of us sat to dine off a common plate. This is customary in northern India. Lalaji served cold vegetables and roti from his side and hot vegetables and hot rotis from my side of the plate. I understood this. I cannot explain the uneasiness which I experienced. I started eating the roti on his side, but he did not allow me. He said, "It would be better to eat cold food first and then the hot one." He started eating.

Another time it was almost a miracle. All of a sudden many guests came to Lalaji's house. A few hours before Lalaji had sent wheat to the flour mill for grinding, but even after hours t' person who went to the mill had not returned. Flour was exhausted ir .ne neighbourhood too. It was getting late. The guests were getting hungrier and hungrier. Lalaji started pondering over this problem. No sooner did he think of purchasing some fruits from the nearby shop to serve the guests, than a rich man came to Lalaji's house with food sufficient for nearly twenty persons and humbly

requested Lalaji to accept that food. Everybody was surprised at this. The guests ate happily.

Once in winter I went to Fatehgarh along with some of my friends. When we alighted at Fatehgarh station it was about one o'clock in the night. Severe cold was piercing the skin. Someone suggested that we spend the night in the station and go to Lalaji's house early in the morning. I was craving to go to Lalaji's house no matter how late it was in the night. But I was hesitant to wake up people in the house. Ultimately we decided to go in the night itself.

Someone opened the door. Without making noise and disturbing the people in the house we lay down wherever space was available. I got space on the veranda near the place where a calf was tied. There I spread a blanket, slept on it, covered myself with another blanket. Early in the morning Lalaji's son observed me and told Lalaji, "Father, he was sleeping at night near the place meant for tying calf." Lalaji did not pay much attention to this. All was known to him. As I was every moment enjoying the pleasure of his company I slept happily without experiencing the slightest cold.

Lalaji's wife was short-tempered. Contrary to this Lalaji was extremely patient. Lalaji used to stress repeatedly that a saint's wife should be short-tempered because in his opinion this made it convenient to learn the lesson of tolerance.

Once the son of the collector there was suffering from viral fever. All medicines failed to cure him. Then someone told the collector about Lalaji's spiritual attainments. The collector came running to Lalaji and after a lot of persuasion he took Lalaji to his house. From the following day the boy started recovering and he was fully cured in a few days. At this the collector was very happy. But someone complained to the collector that Lalaji had acquired evil powers because of which the collector's son suffered from fever. Then Lalaji boldly said, "Sir, I do not know such evils. I am not a saint who cheats people. If you did not have faith in my saintliness why at all did you approach me? Please do not utter these words again." The collector bowed his head in shame and was quiet. From then onwards he started respecting Lalaji.

Lalaji spent his childhood with great difficulty. He had only his mother to look after him and take care of all necessities. Many times he did not get dinner. He used to sleep taking only a little milk. He sacrificed a lot for his younger brother. In his effort to sustain his family, he gave away his share of paternal property to his younger brother.

Lalaji was extremely thrifty in speech. He used to sit with his disciples without uttering a single word, for hours together. But when he realised that this would hurt those who had come to see him he would start speaking. Then he would chat continuously and at length. People would listen to him spell bound. (The same nature has also grown in me.)

Those who came in contact with Lalaji even for a short time would feel that he was a saint of calibre. He was simple and pure. Though he spoke less people did not come to know he spoke less. But I am not like that. People think I am a fool. Lalaji once told me that people are deceived by my simplicity. This is very much true.

Nearly sixty mendicants (sannyasis) used to come to Lalaji for meditation. But he did not make any one of them a preceptor. Do you know why? If he did so they would develop enormous arrogance.

Thirteen years after Lalaji's *mahasamadhi* I was ordered to work as his representative. When I was transmitting to abhyasis I was feeling a thick stream of light flowing from my heart. Many abhyasis could not tolerate this. Once during satsangh an elderly abhyasi suddenly cried aloud, "What are you doing? How can anyone tolerate if you transmit like this? How will Lalaji's work go on?"

"This is my daily routine," I said, "please tell me how to regulate this." The old man suggested that I should pray to Lalaji Maharaj in this regard. I did so. Lalaji was pleased. He said, "As this capacity was given to you I did not want to prevent it without your request. I was waiting for you to pray." From that day onwards there was gentleness in my transmission.

Shri Lalaji's powers and abilities were unlimited. I do not know anything parallel to him. He could transform people just by his looks. Once he chose a vagabond for spiritual training. He was immoral. But look at Lalaji's abilities. Each time the disciple went in the immoral direction he experienced impotency. Because of this he struggled many times and

ultimately gave up his immoral behaviour. He is still alive. On hearing Lalaji's name tears roll down his eyes as expression of gratitude to Lalaji.

People used to bring a variety of fruits and edibles for Lalaji. Whenever I went to Fatehgarh I used to eat grapes sumptuously.

There was a *mauli* (doctor) in the neighbourhood of Lalaji. Once when Lalaji was suffering from pain in the stomach the mauli cured it. From that day Lalaji developed special respect for the mauli.

Once both of them went to see a Muslim saint. The saint made them wait for a long time outside his house. After that, through his servant, he sent an insulting message, "I meet only those who are in touch with God." Though Lalaji tolerated the insult, the mauli did not. Then Lalaji showed a miracle, and all of a sudden the saint felt tremendous burning in his stomach. He humbly requested both Lalaji and the mauli to come inside. Then Lalaji questioned the saint, "Are you now assured of whether or not I am in contact with God? You had to undergo this punishment for insulting the elderly person accompanying me. Do you understand?" The saint accepted his mistake and begged for forgiveness. Immediately his stomach pain vanished. While returning, Lalaji told the mauli that saints should not be arrogant.

Lalaji had a small book in which he noted down how to perform miracles. I requested Lalaji's son to give me that book to read. Lalaji instructed me not to read it. Maybe he was afraid that reading that book might spoil me. In fact miracles are petty things. It requires will power. Lalaji performed many a miracle during his lifetime. But there is no mention of these anywhere. His attention did not at all flow towards miracles, any time.

Lalaji said that after offering *prasad* at home, it should be given first to young children. He used to call the children in his lane and distribute prasad to them. Lalaji used to say, "Children eat prasad happily."

Lalaji often used to say, "Every human being has one defect or another. Our attention should be on their good qualities and not on their bad ones." I did not ever see even a single weak point in Lalaji.

Lalaji ate very little. His hunger was limited. He survived on only two rotis a day. Though there were many things in him worth copying, I copied this from him. He did not have a single imperfection. Once I was

dejected that though Lalaji was a mine of good qualities I did not copy even one of them. Immediately a voice from above spoke thus, "You have copied the *laya avastha* (total merger) which nobody else has done so far."

One of Lalaji's extraordinary capabilities was his manner of answering questions. This indeed is worth imitating. To villagers he would explain in rustic language and to the educated he would answer intellectually. He would explain the problem lucidly and clearly.

"Nature's Work Will Never Suffer"

SHASHI DHAWAN, SECUNDERABAD, INDIA

I knew Babuji from my teens and I saw him for the first time at a function organised by the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sanghi in 1962 in Shahjahanpur, when Babuji was given a certificate by the RSS for his service and honesty at his job in the court. He was the only person from Shahjahanpur to get this certificate. He was wearing a black *sherwani aligarh pyjama* and *topi*. I was attracted by his eyes. Seeing him for the first time I had an urge to be close to him without knowing why. Still a teenager, I started meditation after I met him. Babuji asked me to close my eyes and meditate. I felt this man was the only one fit to be meditated upon and I started meditation on him naturally.

There were so many learned and scholarly people in the Mission and it was a surprise to everyone that Babuji chose me to work on Part 1 of his autobiography which he dictated to me. He used to say, "I needed a fool for this job." He thought intelligent people tended to interfere with his thoughts and add their own ideas while writing his book. He instructed me to keep writing what he said without making any sound, not even sounds of agreement, because he said these sounds would disturb the flow.

Almost every day Babuji used to intercommune with Lalaji Sahib, and I used to feel that some great soul was present. Lalaji gave Babuji directions and instructions on various subjects. Babuji used to wave his hands in the air, murmur something and say now Lalaji was explaining, "You write down, Bitiya." Then he said that what we write from memory is *smruti* and what we hear from up is *sruti a*nd when atmosphere is created and explained for a specific purpose, then it is *richa*. During these sessions with Babuji, the atmosphere was full of light, like an ocean of luminosity.

I used to go almost every evening and sit with Babuji so that he could dictate to me, and my father used to come and pick me up before going home from his shop. Ours was a joint family and my father's brother was an idol worshipper and against Babuji. He felt that a guru should only be a Brahmin and Babuji was a Kayasth which was not acceptable to him. However, he still didn't mind my father going to Babuji but he simply could not tolerate my going. He used to tell my father that it was not proper for Shashi to go to Babuji. She should get married and she is too young to get into spirituality and to stay up until eleven o'clock with Babuji was not acceptable at all.

One day my father complained to Babuji, "Babuji, this girl comes to you every day and sits here up to eleven o'clock in the night. When will she study? And you know that ours is a joint family and it isn't proper for an unmarried girl to spend so much time here." Babuji agreed with my father and said, "Yes, yes, you are right. She should not be here for so long."

I was upset with my father because he was not allowing me to be with Babuji, and upset with Babuji because he did not support me. Moreover, I was staying with Babuji so late because he wanted me there for writing his autobiography.

In any case the next day I decided to leave Babuji's place early and I said my *pranams* to him. He said innocently, "Bitiya, we have just started writing, why are you leaving so early?"

"No Babuji, you and my father yesterday were telling me that it is not proper for me to be here up to eleven PM, so I am going."

"No, Bitiya," Babuji said, "do not worry about it. Your father will come and pick you up."

I was angry with Babuji that he was telling my father one thing and at the same time asking me to stay back and I was needlessly getting scoldings from my father. I felt that a guru should be brave and say the right thing and that he should not say one thing to my father and another thing to me. I was angry and upset and I did not go to Babuji for the next two days.

Babuji sent Sister Kasturi to my house and she cajoled me and took me back to Babuji and I told him, "Whatever it is, you should not be

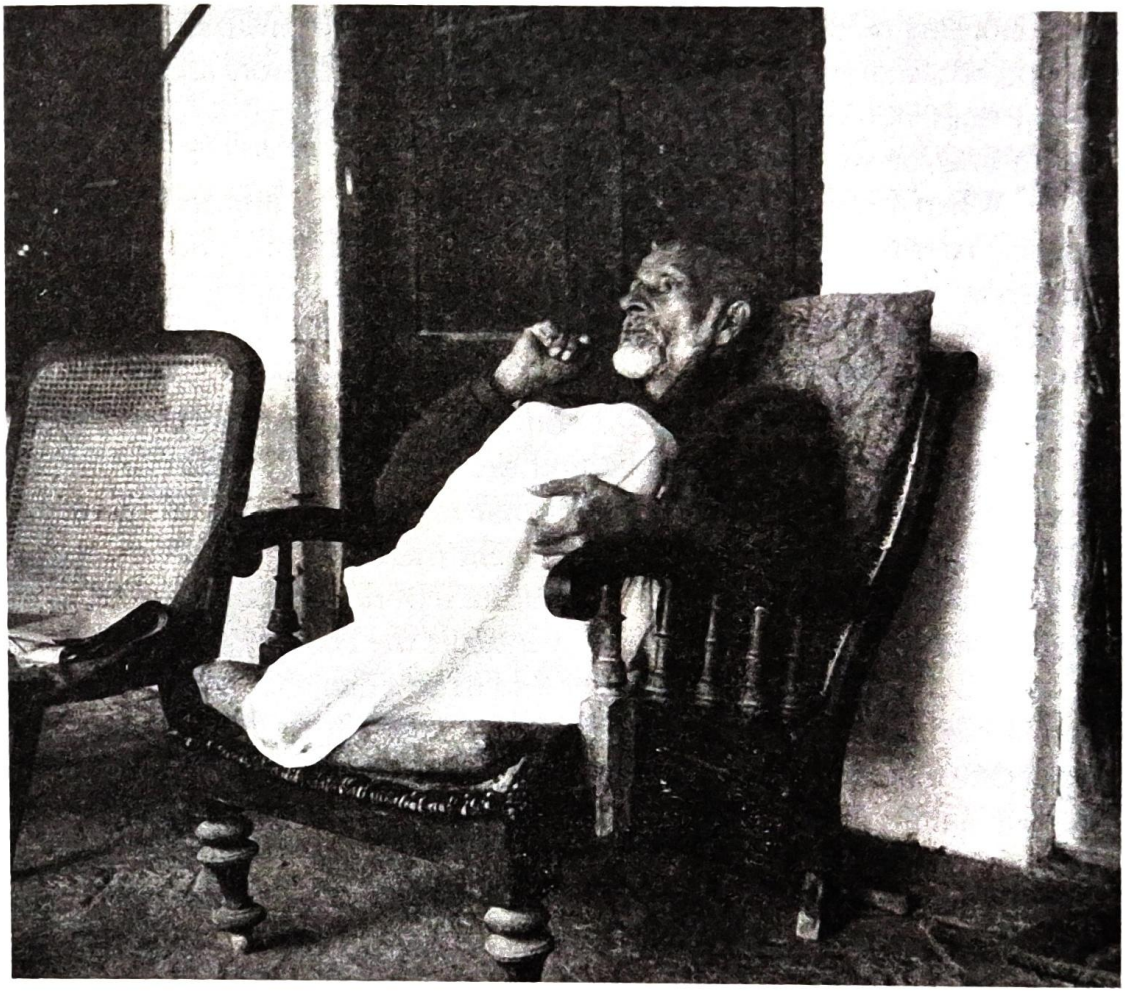
saying one thing to my father and one thing to me. Already there is a lot of opposition in my house. My uncle is against me coming to you, he feels that being a girl I should not get into spirituality as I have to go to others' houses after marriage and become adjusted there. He doesn't mind my brother coming, but he doesn't want Shashi to go. Now with your statement to my father, he is also scolding me. You should tell whatever it be, the same thing to me and my father."

"No, no, Bitiya, you should not say this. He is your father and I respect him. I cannot disagree with him. But I like you and I want you to be with me and when I am there what opposition you will have. Remember that opposition makes a person strong." Then I started going to Babuji regularly.

My elder brother's marriage was fixed and my father requested Babuji to attend the *Baraat* at Kanpur. Babuji tried to avoid this, pleading ill health but, my father kept on asking him and this went on for some time. My uncle said he would not attend my brother's marriage if Babuji attended. It was the first marriage in our entire family and he was my father's only brother and it was important for him to attend the marriage. My father told my uncle, "Brother, Babuji will attend the marriage and you will also attend." He was very positive and strong willed. Babuji once said that I was like my father. So, my father was pestering Babuji to attend the marriage and my brother said, "Babuji, I will not marry if you do not attend my marriage." Finally, Babuji agreed to go and we arranged a special car for him.

Everybody got into the buses and my father and brother and my maternal uncle went with Babuji in the car. My uncle did not turn up until just before we were to start, but then he was singing and dancing with us, as happens at marriages in North India. We were wondering how this sudden change came about. Certainly, Babuji changed my uncle's mind and he was absolutely normal and taking care of everybody. He took care of Babuji very well, he washed his clothes, took care of his food and other needs and also gave him massage. What a change, I thought.

When I was doing my MA at Allahabad University my father once asked Babuji to come to our house to stay with us for a rest. Babuji agreed and said, "I will come when Shashi Bitiya has vacation but only on one



condition that I would get rest of my mind. I should have freedom and there should be no force for *nahana, fakhana* and *sona* (bath, toilet and sleep)."

My father agreed and during Dussehra vacation that year, Babuji came to our house and stayed for about fifteen days with us. At eleven AM every morning he would dictate me his book on special instructions for full preceptors containing clear details for all the full preceptors and now even Chariji does not want it published. At that time Sister Kasturi was at Bareilly and she would come to be with us.

When I was taking down this dictation on full preceptors work, I was just twenty-one years old and was only an abhyasi and I did not understand much of what he was telling me to write. Slowly my holidays were coming to an end and I had to go back to university and the book was not complete. I was worried and so was Babuji. He said, "Bitiya, Lalaji's work will not be completed and it should not happen." And then, just before my holidays came to an end, we received information from our preceptor brother at Allahabad saying that my university would be closed indefinitely because of some union problem there. Babuji was very happy to hear this news and said, "Look, Nature's work will never suffer, it is Lalaji's grace." I was very happy and eventually the book was completed.

While I was still at university I went to Shahjahanpur for January and stayed back for Basant. During this period I felt that Babuji was overloaded with administrative work. So I said, "Babuji why don't you get a proper administrative structure for the Mission. In our university we have vice-chancellor, general secretary, joint secretary and so on to take care of administration. We should have a similar set up for the Mission." I suggested that Parthasarathi Bhaisahib would be the person for the job of general secretary. Babuji was pleased and inquired, "Why do you feel that he is a fit person for this job?"

I said, "Babuji, I feel that he is very obedient to you. Moreover he is in a managerial job handling administration and he travels a lot." Babuji was very happy at my suggestion and said, "Your suggestion is good, Bitiya, but will Parthasarathi agree for this?"

I said, "He is so obedient to you, he will definitely agree." And so the appointment was made. A working committee was also formed. Babuji

said, "You are my wise girl and you give good ideas, so you should be part of it. He even published this in Lalaji's Centenary Souvenir. Babuji was very happy with Parthasarathi Bhaisahib's work and told me, "I am preparing Parthasarathi as my representative." Chariji was not aware of these conversations.

Sometime in 1969 Babuji Maharaj went to South India for about three months and I missed him terribly in Shahjahanpur. The desire to see him got very strong and while I was doing my cleaning in the evening, I suddenly saw Babuji standing in front of me dressed in his blue *sherwani,* white pyjama and cap and laughing his usual way. He told me, "Bitiya, today you are remembering me too much, so I have come to you in *sookshma shariri.* Don't do this again. It is very a painful and troublesome job to be physically present there and come to you in my *sookshma shariri."* He was with me for over fifteen minutes. I immediately wrote a detailed letter to Babuji about this, which crossed with his letter, as they were written almost simultaneously. In the letter he wrote that I should never want to see him to such an extent when it was not possible.

One day when I was sitting with Babuji, he said, "Look out, there is a policeman with a summons in his hands waiting outside." I looked out and found nobody and I told him the same. He said, these days no one is listening to me. Even you are not listening to me, and he went out and saw that really nobody was there and he came back and sat. I feel that what he saw then was much later in the future when we had problems in our Mission at Shahjahanpur. We cannot say that this was idiosyncrasy. There was a lot of meaning in this.

Babuji liked songs, and once when he was with us in my house at Bareilly during Dussehra vacation he asked me to sing a song. I was very shy, but he insisted. I sang for about three minutes when he suddenly came into the mood for singing and started singing the song *Prabhu mere, avagun chith na dharo.* (Lord, do not see my shortcomings with your heart.)

We were all thrilled to see Babuji sing his favourite song. He then sang this song touching the with *agni chakra.* Then the surroundings became very hot. He later sang this song touching *jal chakra* in *Hegh raag* and it started to rain in Bareilly. It was a lovely experience. He told us that there was a prostitute in Agra who was so spiritual and talented that once

when she was singing there was a bridge which cracked. Babuji said that we should never look down on them as they were also very talented and spiritual. Such was his compassion.

Whenever they travelled abroad it was Chariji who took care of Babuji's belongings. Obviously there was nothing Babuji carried which Chariji did not know about. On this trip, Babuji was attracted to a child and she was in love with Babuji. She went and sat in Babuji's lap and started playing with his beard. Babuji said to the girl, "I have a gift for you, wait I will bring it." Babuji came back with a doll, which looked just like Babuji, with a beard and all and gave it to the little girl. She was very happy and went away. Chariji was shocked, "Babuji," Chariji asked, "when did you bring this doll? I did not pack this and I did not see it." Babuji smiled and said that it was not necessary to know everything. Chariji felt that Babuji created the doll and presented it to her.

"When Work is Given, Power is Also Provided"

A.H. KRISHNA, BANGALORE, INDIA

On the night of September 6, 1990 I had an intense longing for Babuji. He appeared at about four a.m. on September 7, and fed me with a glass of *kheer* by pouring it little by little into my mouth. Because of the love with which He fed me, I could not have said whether the *kheer* was bland or sufficiently sweetened. I dreamt that I came out of the room and saw some abhyasis. When they asked me why I was looking so happy, I stuck out my tongue and showed them the particles of rice left and explained my experience.

My beloved Babuji gave me the chance to live with him and work for the Mission from 1976 to 1979. He wrote me that I would be treated with love and asked me to work on the accounts which had fallen heavily into arrears. I was working for about sixteen to twenty hours a day until the load was cleared in six months. It was a great wonder. I found a huge capacity for work and Babuji used to make kind enquiries whether I was feeling tired and needed energy, which he said he could supply if required. Perhaps he was filling in of his own accord. I always felt fit. I told him that I was really surprised at the speed with which the jobs were getting cleared. It was a unique experience and a real miracle.

Babuji gave me four individual sittings during those three years, each being for a specific purpose. The one which was given after midnight was for sharpening the mind to increase its capacity by ten times with a view to offset the shortage of men to work for the Mission in Shahjahanpur. He told me, "Wherever you are, you will be taken care of. Your working for me and my care for you are forever."

Babuji used to collect his pension from the Treasury Office once every three months. On that day the driver failed to report for work as

required, so Babuji had to go by rickshaw. I accompanied him and regretfully I found the staff slow at their work. They had no consideration for his age and he had to wait two hours for his money. During our return journey, I suggested that the pension could be collected by the bank. He was averse to this change in practice even if it meant saving time and trouble. He said, "If the bankers forgot I would lose my money, so don't change."

On reaching home, we found the driver there. He asked for Master's pardon for the delay because his wife did not wake him up on time. Babuji said, "No one is at fault. He slept because he was tired and his wife did not want to disturb her husband. It is okay."

One day Babuji appeared to be tired after lunch but could not lie on his bed as Sister Kasturi and an abhyasi were sitting in his room, talking. He was dozing in his chair. I went into the adjacent room to see if the cot was free. Someone was sleeping on it. The moment I thought of waking him up, Babuji said in a low voice, "Don't disturb him, he is coming from Meerut. He did not have sleep last night." I went to Babuji's room and silently prayed for a solution. Sister Kasturi and the abhyasi suddenly shifted to another room. I requested him to go and rest on the bed, which he did. These small details indicate how he cared for the comfort and convenience of others.

It sometimes looked as if some abhyasis were unaware of the main purpose of their visit and behaved in a savage manner. One evening Babuji was in his room while some abhyasis seated on the veranda were engaged in a heated discussion on politics and politicians. Babuji came out and sat with them. The discussion continued and I signalled them to be silent. They were unmindful and over and above this one abhyasi repeatedly sought Babuji's opinion on the activities of a politician. Babuji got up, walked to the courtyard and started plucking the small unwanted plants there. Some abhyasis joined Babuji in his work. The talk ended and the ground was cleaned in a short time.

Then an abhyasi chewing *paan* and tobacco spat on the clean wall of the guest house. Babuji took a bucket of water, a plastic mug and a broom and washed the wall clean. The culprit was chided by other abhyasis. Even under extreme provocation Babuji did not hurt the feelings of others. His reactions were passive, corrective and instructive. He was magnanimous.

Babuji was also very kind to animals. While going to the office one day he saw a monkey on the road bleeding profusely. There was no hope of saving its life, so he stood close by and gave it salvation. In the same way he had helped a dog and a cow after their death at his house.

Within a week of his *mahasamadhi,* Babuji appeared to me in a dream and said, "These years, you have been working for the Mission, now you work for me," and then disappeared.

And then some abhyasis sought clarifications relating to practice, progress, experience (physical and spiritual etc.). I suggested that they consult preceptors. They said they also wanted to have details from me, an abhyasi who had stayed with Babuji for some time and witnessed the exchange which passed between abhyasis who visited him from different parts of the world. So I had discussions on a wide range of points with the abhyasis seeking information.

They were keenly interested in knowing the manner in which Babuji treated the visiting abhyasis. This could only be known by experience. Each one felt that individual attention was a gift from Babuji. The departures were sad and tearful. What else could they have been when parting from Babuji, the personification of humility, simplicity and love? This experience with the visiting sisters and brothers was important because it helped me maintain faith in his earlier statement that he could respond directly or through other means of his choice.

I was feeling continuously uncomfortable for three days at the thought that Babuji's separation might block our contact with him. On the fourth day, He appeared again in a dream and said, "Whatever was needed up to our last meeting at Shahjahanpur has been taken care of. Now I am watching. You see what is happening in the Mission."

Some time in 1979, when I was at Shahjahanpur, Babuji had detected a block in my heart. He wanted to have it removed by a particular preceptor, but the preceptor was not informed. Later, in 1983, Chariji casually asked me if Babuji had spoken to me about my condition. I told him about the block in my heart. He cleared it away. I am convinced that the work was left to be finished by Babuji's successor so that I could experience the continuity of Divine help.

"Happy Was the Time When You Saw Me"

HANS GANGLOFF, MUNICH, GERMANY

My life was not worth much in August 1973 when I went to India on a special quest, leaving behind the chaos of my existence. In my diary I wrote such sentences as, "Always this idea that it might as well end now," or "Is this life done?"

On August 27, 1973 after nine o'clock in the evening I booked into the Connemara Hotel. It was dark outside as well as inside myself. I called Dr. C.A. Rajagopalachari (Parthasarathi's father), whom I had got to know in Munich, and I told him I was tired and would sleep somewhat longer tomorrow. But no, this was not possible. Rajaji, as we came to call him later, had already disposed of my time.

At eight thirty Rajaji was at the hotel. A distinguished refined man, was my first thought. I liked him immediately. Very soon a deep affectionate friendship had developed between Rajaji and myself. We often drove to the surroundings of Madras, enjoying their very special charm. We had very many beautiful discussions mainly about spirituality. This was how I learned about the existence of this "guru" in Uttar Pradesh called Ram Chandra.

I was equipped with the books about this "Raja Yoga" for our present time, which Rajaji practised. Sahaj Marg, the Natural Way, was said to be very simple and to lead with Master's help to the realisation of God. "Why don't you try it with my Master?" said Rajaji after a while. Even before coming to India I had been thinking of separating from my Zen practice and there had been so many other things. Still I hesitated to take such a decisive step only because I hated to do things by halves. However, Rajaji had succeeded in gaining my total confidence.

"If you come back," he said, "I would meet you in Delhi and go with you to see Master in Shahjahanpur." It was only much later that I realised the tremendous help offered to me by Rajaji who was always present in critical situations, supporting, correcting and helping. How precious indeed was this upright, reliable man of India where countless temple steps were crowded with crazy, young European and American drug addicts, and so-called 'gurus' haunted railway stations and street corners.

And so we met again in August in 1974 at the Ashoka Hotel in Delhi. After two days in the city, we took the Varanasi Express for a rattling journey through the night until the train stopped early in the morning at Shahjahanpur. Around six o'clock we reached Babuji's half-open gate of the ashram, showing the arcades of loggia. In contrast to outside here everything was clean. My first impression was that here was a place of peace! Then Master appeared between the columns of loggia, moved slowly towards us, a slim, luminous, almost transparent figure dressed entirely in white. Rajaji and I bowed and he hugged Rajaji first and then me in silence with an earnest smile. Shortly afterwards we were seated in silence with a few abhyasis and Master sat in front of us in a big chair, silently smoking his hookah, his eyes fixed in the distance, as if we did not exist.

I never felt so insignificant in my life, since this strange silence was absolutely frustrating my ego. What was I doing here? And the temperature went up and up. Nobody spoke. I was perplexed. Was it permitted to interrupt this silence? Was this already the first lesson I had to learn?

After a while Master got up rather unexpectedly and gave me a hand sign that I should follow. We moved to the so-called guesthouse to one end of the courtyard. I was carrying my rather heavy trunk. Monkeys were playing funny games on the flat roof of the guesthouse. Master opened the door to a modest room with a desk inside, a wooden bench, a wooden bed, bare walls except for a big oil painting of a bearded man with piercing eyes sitting in a yoga posture. It was a portrait of Lalaji, the founder of Sahaj Marg, as I learned later and his stare made me feel uncomfortable.

"Will this be all right?" said Master abruptly, indicating the room. And his voice seemed to imply, "For you with your pretensions, will this be sufficient at all?"

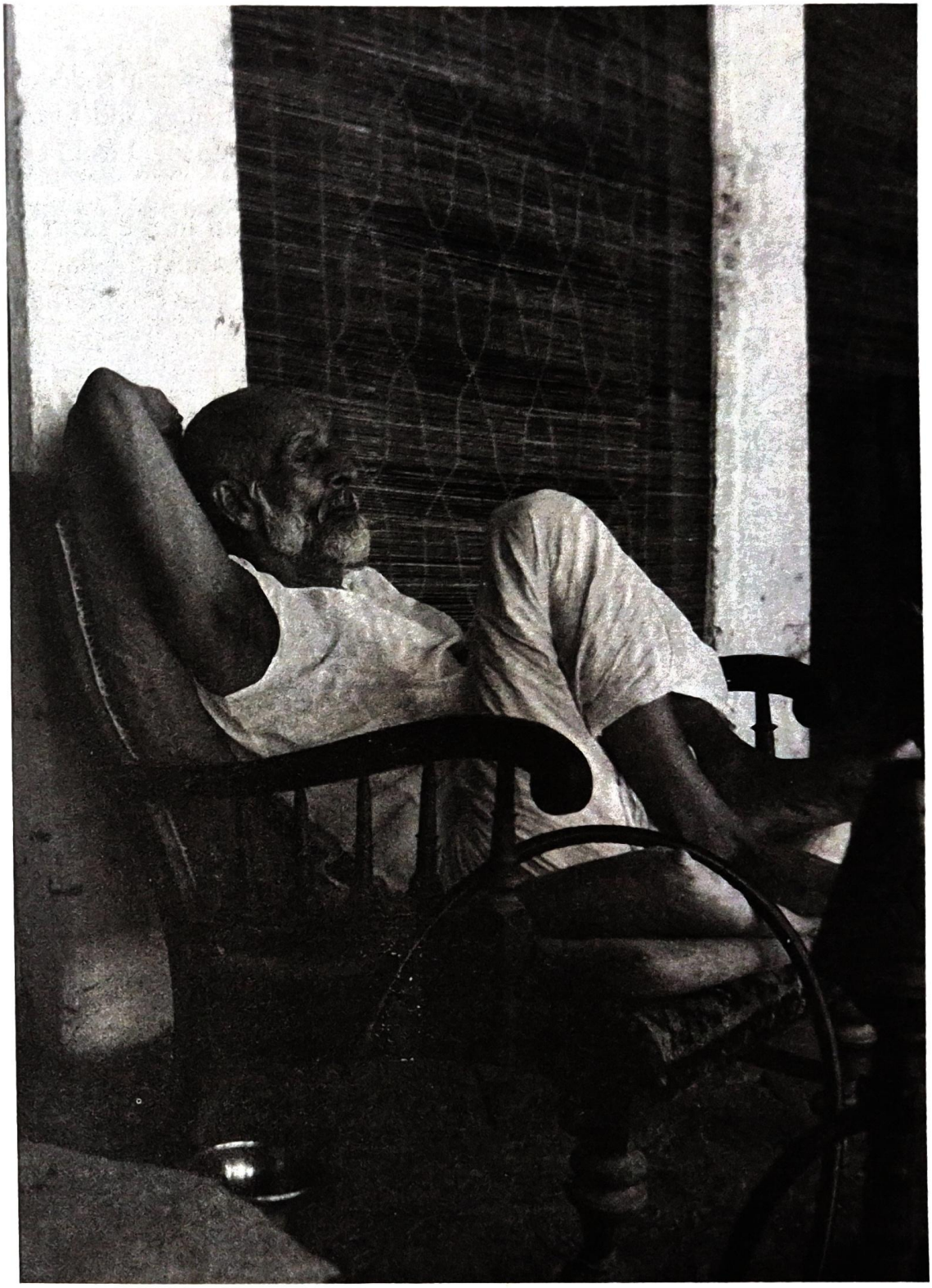
I said, "Yes." Master closed the door and disappeared without saying anything else. Now I was alone with these piercing eyes looking at me from the wall. It was very hot. I tried to unpack the many useless items one carries along on such a journey 'for eventualities'. However, this was not possible since I was too entangled in myself. Dripping with perspiration, my face unwashed, I finally dropped down on the hard bed. I tried to sleep but this was impossible too because now my thoughts started rotating all the more. After all I was a burnt child due to past occult experiences which I am not going to talk about here. What kind of Master was this? I started asking myself. He smokes and preaches detachment. Would drugs be involved by any chance? Was this Master nothing but a medium 'utilised' by people like Rajaji for whatever means? Had I run into a trap? Should I better leave immediately? This went on the whole morning.

I had to speak to Rajaji who came around noon. I confessed everything openly, my confusion, my painful thoughts, unsparing and direct. Rajaji laughed. Then we discussed it all extensively. During the first two years he had the same dreadful doubts. As a strict Brahmin he felt smoking was like treachery. We went on talking. Rajaji said, "We are brothers." There was a loving warmth in his voice, which came from the heart. So, I remained in Shahjahanpur and tried to regulate my thinking. This was August 30, 1974.

Following this prelude came dramatic days of cleaning. An enormous amount of prejudice, distrust, conceit and vanity had to be removed at once, in order not to give up one's last hope by running away.

Master achieved in a few days, what in the hands of any psychoanalyst would have taken years, because all this stuff was rooted in the uttermost depth of character and past impressions.

August 31, 1974: After an almost sleepless night in dirt and heat– water suddenly stopped flowing the night before. This morning, first meditation with Master, a strong, deeply moving experience. A terrible amount of inner dirt in the depth of which I crossed with the velocity of



light, as it seemed to me, with Master's help. It was like a swamp suddenly stirred up. Black and red first, then black and white figures and forms. Then calmness and a feeling of deep peace. Rajaji is next to me. I feel I can now trust.

September 2, 1974: During breakfast, strong pain in the heart in spite of a double dose of cardiolytics. I feel that I have reached the limit of tolerance. But Master seems to know my condition, because this morning for the first time there was no meditation, thus no pin-pointed transmission. The fan is out of order again. I am breaking out in perspiration. In spite of physical symptoms there is a feeling of much greater stability. In the evening meditation with Rajaji as ordered by Master.

September 3, 1974: I am physically exhausted but inside there is peace. Confidence and love for Master are increasing. Hardly any more doubts. Master turns around towards me and with a vivid gesture, "Your work is going on, even if we don't sit!" Otherwise not much seemed to happen today.

September 4, 1974: Slept again until three-thirty only. Heavy crises again. After reading the first page of *Voice Real* had a sudden attack of despair. Obviously Sahaj Marg is not at all the 'easy way'. In the long run things may be as inaccessible as before. Am I fit at all? After breakfast I was told by Master that today for the first time I would have a sitting alone, that means without Rajaji's usual presence. During meditation I am all of a sudden getting the answer to all of my questions and doubts of early this morning. It's like deliverance. After the sitting I reported all this to Master. He smiled without saying a word. Later on he told Rajaji, pointing at me, "We did a thorough cleaning!"

After supper Master is particularly talkative. It is amazing to witness the precision, the fullness of memory, the quickness with which the brilliant brain is working. Questions are answered, stories are told, many times funny, always with a loving smile and plenty of humour. Everybody laughs. Then there is seriousness again. "I never lose my time doing any useless talking," says Master, when things are getting too exuberant. As a matter of fact every word has a connection with a problem one of us is having.

Thus we often stay until past midnight under His loving care. Master's strength seems inexhaustible. Tomorrow morning quite awhile before six o'clock he will get up again and I can never observe any sign of fatigue in him. This is how the days and evenings are passing by. Almost daily we have meditation with Master.

My diary (September 6, 1974) tries to catch the atmosphere of these sittings: We enter Master's room and sit down in a half circle around him. Everything here is different and incomparable with any of the usual solemn meditation practices. Master sits in a yoga posture but sometimes in a completely relaxed reclined position. In the room itself there is a sort of resting silence, difficult to describe, in spite of the fact that it is permanently noisy outside. Donkeys are braying, dogs are barking, a rattling bus is driving past, birds are chirping, children are playing and crying, the printing press across the courtyard is working and makes loud and rhythmic noises. Nothing disturbs. Yesterday the phone rang in the middle of meditation. Master took the receiver, replied in a low voice and replaced it. Meditation went on like a bath in motionless water.

Later on, we are sitting again with Master either in the shade of the loggia or after sunset in the poorly illuminated courtyard. There are discussions, questions. He always answers with benevolence, practical advice and many periods of common silence. Master looks then like being absent; not tangible anymore, but within seconds he is on the spot again.

It is still very hot. The desiccated air is burning on the skin. We are dripping with perspiration, while weary fans stir the stuffy air. The current is weak and sometimes the electricity goes completely. Sometimes the water. The nights are almost unbearable because it hardly cools down. Sleep is out of the question. After midnight I count the hours, and listen to the rhythmic and melancholic singsong of the watchman. Sometimes I can see the man in the twilight of the lonely street. He is bearing a long stick over his shoulder. His right hand beats rhythmically in tune with his monotonous singing. It has a ghostlike quality in the sleepy night. And always this burning heat.

September 9, 1974: It is not even ten o'clock in the morning and I am already bathed in perspiration. "Master is very anxious," says Rajaji, "that this tremendous heat may harm you." Around noon however, a few

clouds suddenly appear on that permanently cloudless sky. Just as Master said, he is afraid, this heat may last until September 20th. After hardly half an hour the whole sky is overcast. It rains! A very mild thunderstorm rumbles in the neighbourhood. One hour later the sun is shining again but there is a refreshing cool breeze. A tremendous benefit after eleven days of burning air! Master worked a miracle.

September 12, 1974: The heat has been increasing again. The sky is cloudless. The motionless air feels like hot lead. Everything seems caked with dirt. I go back to my room since I cannot bear it anymore outside. But even here it is not the faintest bit better. I believe I am going to suffocate. Rajaji brings me some water.

September 13, 1974: My mind is free, detached. I am 'away from my body'. This is a small word, says Rajaji. "Your condition is called 'non-attachment'!"

It is amazing what Master's work has achieved in this short time. Where is the psychoanalyst on this planet capable of accomplishing such a transformation in such a short time? In the morning Rajaji and I are sitting again in Master's company. For the first time it is for me just a simple happiness to be close to Him whatever may or may not happen. He seems to be in a very good talkative mood this morning. Just a few sentences from my memory:

"In the olden days everybody asked for realisation. Today everybody asks for peace and I start giving peace because you people ask for it, but realisation must be the ultimate goal."

"A saint has removed all his samskaras. So there is no reason for him to stay in this life and he starts taking up the samskaras of his abhyasis."

"You never leave me and I am always with you."

"Whenever you have worries, think of point B of the heart region and keep meditating on this point. This is another thing other than the usual meditation on the heart. You can do it in the daytime for five to ten minutes, whenever necessary." (*Efficacy of Raja Yoga*)

September 14, 1974: The last day in Shahjahanpur dawns. A group of preceptors arrive. Rajaji tells of his first arrival in Shahjahanpur, as usual in the very early morning:

In the twilight a very unpretentious man came toward him, took his luggage from the rickshaw and asked, "Are you Dr. Rajagopalachari?" "Yes, I am," replies Rajaji. "Then come with me, please," says the other man and picks up the luggage. "No, no," says Rajaji, "this I will do myself." It is going awhile like this until Rajaji wants to know when he will be able to see Master. "The Master," says the other man, "this is me."

Then came the external parting from Master. There is sadness in the heart. From now on I will call Master "Babuji". I longed to take Rajaji with me to Germany and six months later, at the end of March 1975, he arrived in Munich and lived in my house at the Schuleinplatz, an enormous help during the following difficult months.

It was hard work, over a long period, to get established in Germany, but in 1976 Babuji came to Munich. His health was already shaky, nevertheless he answered every question however improper and gave sittings to whoever wanted to participate. He also made me a preceptor. From Munich, Babuji flew to Switzerland, to the south of France and to Denmark. And when Master came to Munich for the second time in 1980 we had to find a much bigger place. When he left Munich on May 29, 1980 a little step for humanity had been achieved as finally, with Babuji's help, Sahaj Marg had established itself in Germany.

In 1982, my wife Karin and I saw Babuji in Paris. While parting, he gave me a piercing and most loving look as only Babuji could and said, surprisingly, "And you do what you think is good." Ever since I have tried within the frame of my modest means and with His help to live and to act accordingly....

"Raising the Spiritual Level of Humanity"

JEAN MICHEL PIQUEMAL, NICE, FRANCE

In those days, I was a law student, passionately interested in esotericism. I had however, to overcome my great shyness in order to found the group which we called "The Fantastic Realism Workshop" in Nice, 1972. It became a success over the following years as the centre began to attract increasing numbers of speakers, writers and researchers in parapsychology, spirituality and other related disciplines. After a few attempts at meditation in several schools, we asked M. Poray, one of the speakers at the workshop, to organise a regular meeting. It wasn't until later that I learned of the existence of M. Poray's guru, Shri Ram Chandra, at which point it fell upon me to organise his visit to Nice as part of his first trip to the West in early May, 1972.

One morning our secretary Denise Bonjour came to me and said, "Babuji would like a word with you." Chari, as we called him, had to translate Master's words for me.

Babuji asked me "Would you agree to work for me?" I could not see how I could possibly be of help to this embodiment of gentleness, tact and kindness. Also, I couldn't see any reason not to work for him. I asked him what the work would entail. Babuji answered directly and simply, "To raise the spiritual level of humanity." It felt to me like a nuclear reaction had been set in motion by this simple utterance!

Nevertheless, with no time to reflect, I heard myself saying, "Okay Master, I'll do my best." I felt my throat constrict on these words but I knew I could not refuse Master my good will.

On the sixth of May 1972 I was given provisional permission to work, to transmit and to give instruction in the practice of Sahaj Marg. "Sit in front of the meditator and imagine that I am sitting there in your

place," Master said. "You can even imagine my little cap and beard, if you like—you'll see how it works. It is in the doing of the work that we learn in Sahaj Marg!"

Later, Babuji nominated two more preceptors in Paris. And from the centre in Nice, we organised seminars at Draguignan, Toulon, Switzerland—anywhere which showed signs of interest. We reproduced *The Dawn at Reality*, not realising that it was in fact called *Reality at Dawn*, nor that what we had was an incomplete version of the text from which the chapter "My Visions" had been removed by some obscure act of censorship.

Babuji gave me his card and invited me to Shahjahanpur, so in August 1972, I bought my first backpack and set off to join him. Equipped with my fifty words of English, I arrived in Delhi at four AM and immediately began to regret my folly. I had been feeling stunned and out of sorts but as I passed through the wrought iron gates of Babuji's home, I felt I had entered another dimension, beyond time and space where I was at peace.

A great care had gone into the preparation of my visit and even a trip to Uttar Pradesh had been delayed in my honour. However, I accompanied Babuji on this trip. We set off in a jeep in the summer heat on a journey which proved to be as spiritually uplifting as it was physically taxing, my first attack of dysentery was brought on by lowered resistance. Babuji had given me my first talks in French. My colleagues translated the main themes into English and again into Hindi for the villages we visited.

At this point the film "He Who Loves All" appeared. I had a feeling that a large part of my work involved motivating the greatest number of meditators to visit India because I knew that this was the only way to consolidate this group.

Jean Marie B. and I decided to visit Babuji in the summer of 1973. But not wanting to deprive ourselves of an adventure, we set off from Nice in a second hand VW minibus and arrived in Shahjahanpur safe and sound three weeks later despite the second military coup in Kabul. As ever, the place was a haven of peace, friendly and soothing; poor Master, we didn't spare Him our wild imaginings.

So sure was I that my work as a preceptor in that first year had been inadequate, that every day of the journey I told myself I would hand

in my resignation. But there in front of him, I didn't dare tell him, all the while convincing myself that tomorrow would provide an opportunity. Early the following morning I joined Babuji who was already at work, hookah in hand.

For the umpteenth time I told myself not to be afraid, just as Babuji motioned us to enter his room. As I followed behind the small group, I passed in front of Master. "Mister John," he said, "please give me a sitting." Very often he has taught me in silence and so I presumed that my provisional permit was to last because my plan had evaporated. Often he would say to me, "Go to bed because tonight I am going to work on you." Or maybe he would point with his index finger on my chest to explain the famous points.

I began to understand the beauty of Sahaj Marg. It therefore seemed appropriate that we should reconnect with the basic wholeness of the practice and put an end to our dabbling. This happened easily and the moment of glory was the visit to Sister Kasturi and Brother Sundara in May 1977. They introduced us to 'Love – Abandon' dimension which is the innermost essence of Sahaj Marg but which had been carefully avoided. It was becoming increasingly difficult for me to fulfil my duties as secretary as my awareness grew of the gap between the pure form of Sahaj Marg and the form which was being established in France. In 1979, with Master's approval, I resigned from the position of secretary for France. The Mission had increased in size and many more seeds were germinating so that Master's plans for France were manifesting. Today, France is second after India in terms of numbers and for this I am happy. My provisional permit is twenty-five years old.

My life has become one with Sahaj Marg. I got married to Claire and both of us were blessed by Babuji in 1979. I know now that doing one's best is not enough because doing is an illusion. What is real is to let Master work in our lives, to avoid putting obstacles in his way. Sahaj Marg works in spite of us. It is for this reason that I express my gratitude for all that I have been given. We know little about what it is to be a Master, but one among us knows. The work is simple, "It involves raising the spiritual level of Humanity."

"Earn and Learn"

RAMESH HIRA, PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA

Before joining Sahaj Marg, I must have been moving in circles without direction for generations. Then the wisdom of Babuji Maharaj appeared like a shaft of sunlight, illuminating the destination and the way.

An early, most indelible experience with Babuji riveted my interest in Sahaj Marg. Early one morning in 1982 at the ashram in Shahjahanpur, I woke up with an upsurge of deep appreciation for Babuji Maharaj. In this state of bewildering intoxication I started uttering His name ecstatically. There was a painful longing to be always with Him. Unable to bear the onslaught of this experience I wept out of sheer delight, trembling with yearning. This deep longing gushed forth like cascading waters, tumbling and rolling all at once. I felt drenched. Overwhelmed by this sudden uncontrollable rush of feelings, I paced restlessly, uttering his name. After about two hours the waves subsided. Master had brought forth love that lay dormant within me. It was new evidence of Babuji's greatness about which I had known nothing. Master had come like a new season; he had sent the sap flowing in dead branches. It was as if spring had come in winter.

After this 'roller coaster ride' I developed sores resembling small pustules all over my legs. The discomfort and pain made walking difficult. When I asked Babuji whether I should consult a doctor, He advised me not to do so. I then realised that Master must have done a thorough cleaning. My insides must have been flushed clean, just as we clean car engines. Similarly, the accumulation had to be removed from my body in the form of pus. After my recovery I felt less confused. I became more positive and determined to face the challenges of life. There was a gradual

cessation of some of my past activities. To me this was miraculous because no one but Reverend Master could have effected such a transformation.

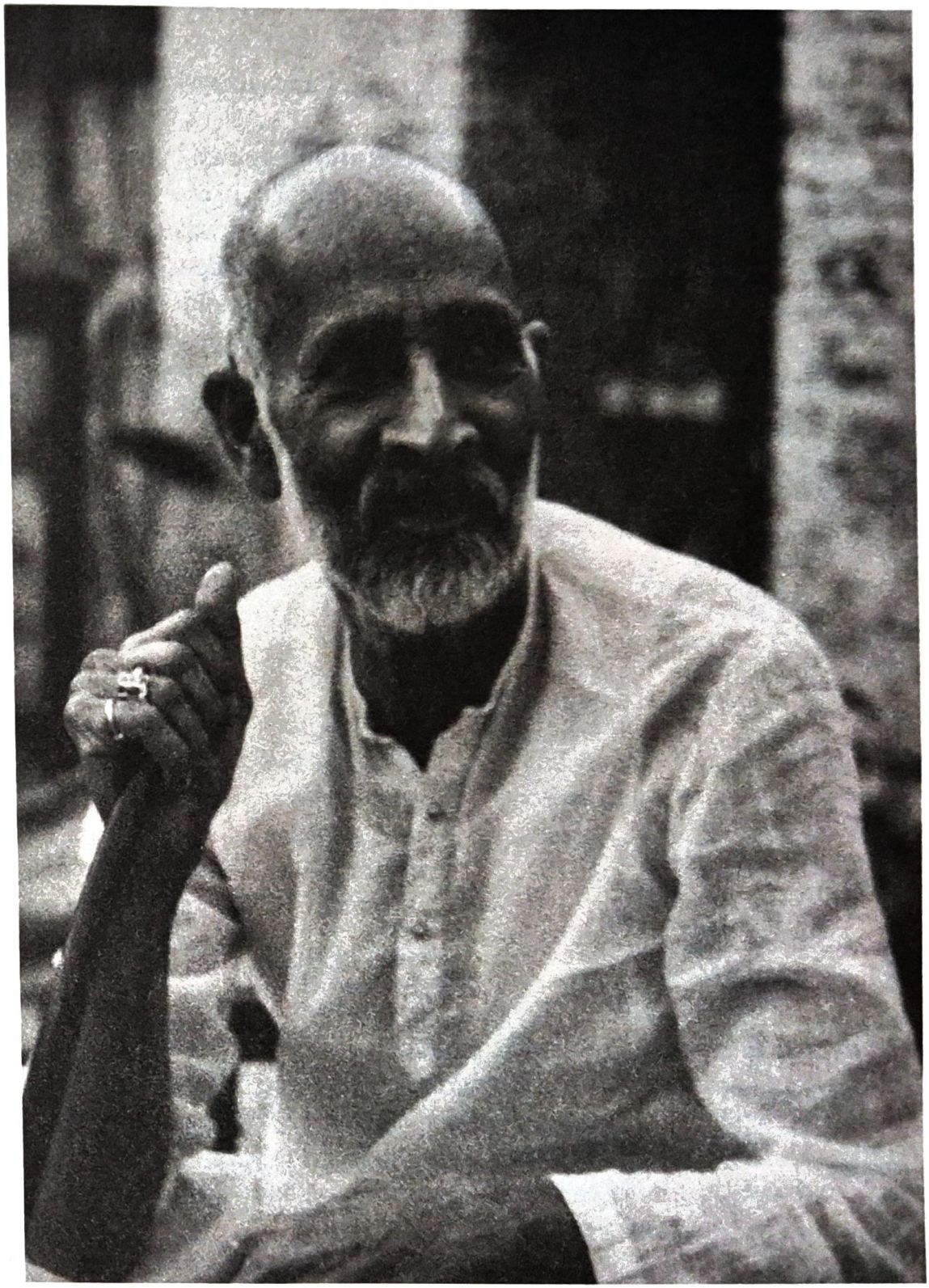
Now what had I done to deserve all these changes? Nothing! The only effort I had made was to travel from South Africa to Shahjahanpur, where I did clerical work for the Mission. I also wanted to resign from my job in South Africa and serve Babuji for the rest of my life at the ashram. However, I had then only been a slave of my wishes. Often only what Master plans materialises. And now I am in South Africa remembering what Babuji did for me.

Another incident I shall never forget occurred one sweltering day in Shahjahanpur in 1982. Sitting outside Babuji's room on the veranda, I happened to be gazing at him in wonderment while he occasionally pulled on his hookah. Suddenly he looked at me and said, "Earn and learn." I knew it meant that I had to earn a living as well as upgrade my qualifications as a schoolteacher. Now, I realise that these words were implanted in me as seeds. I had to nourish them with my will and obedience. Their growth lay in my hands. I had to see to it that the seeds germinated into a healthy tree.

Until then, my inclinations for worldly pursuits had been dampened after reading innumerable books on Hinduism preaching the worthlessness of worldly life. Here Babuji was reminding me to make use of my other 'wing'. This advice was enough to put any self-respecting person to shame, nevertheless, I was already flapping the other wing like a fledgling.

When I flew back to South Africa in 1982, I enrolled at a university. After four years of intensive part-time studies, I acquired a few courses towards a Bachelor of Arts degree. My salary was increased and subsequently I was promoted, for this I was grateful to him. Part of our self-development is in being skilful in our actions and Babuji had done that by giving me these words of advice: 'earn and learn.'

In fact, when Master says do something, power is already given. Chariji has said that we often attach our ego to what we call success. In a sense, worldly success is an enemy of the spiritual life. But that does not mean that we should not be successful. The ego has to be sublimated to



the level where we know that "I" do not exist. I am successful because He had made it possible.

In Sahaj Marg "we proceed towards the unknown," passing from deception to reality. That which has to be reached is our own centre. Every end is followed by a new beginning and eternity waits, beckons in silence, while we undo that which was done like the silent withering of autumn leaves, dropping their petals and remaining motionless. When the echo in the mountains is engulfed by silence, when desires turn to ashes and loveless love shall permeate my being, timeless and unchanging, and it is only the **end**—my Master has destined for me that I shall have the courage to reconcile with my beginning.

"I Will Call You Dhruva"

BIRTHE HAUGAARD, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

My Dear Abhyasi,

You have asked me to tell a little about Babuji, my beloved Master, and no words are found, because how to talk about love and wisdom? But now by the thought of Him in my spiritual ears His voice is heard:

'Because you are my associate I tell you.'
'Be plain and simple to be in tune with nature.'
'God is God. Nobody can be God, but you can be Godlike.'
'God is the real Master.'
'God is mighty. I am almighty because I can make mistakes.'
'God is peace maker. Master is peace giver and you are peace receiver.'
'I don't belong to India alone but to the whole world.'
'A capacity like me might not come for the next 10,000 years.'
'I am the greatest servant of humanity.'
'I'm not a talker, I'm a silencer.'
'Of course I love all.'

Ram Chandra

And let me end this letter by telling you about the last visit of Babuji in 1980 to Copenhagen, Denmark. It was one of the last evenings. We were all gathered around Babuji, no words were spoken and everyone was feeling sad. Suddenly Babuji raised His voice saying, "When a spiritual Master leaves His bodily existence, He will of course always follow His abhyasis."

With love Birthe

P.S. In April 1971 I visited Babuji Maharaj in his home in Shahjahanpur for the first time. In fact I was the first one from the West, therefore one day Babuji said, "I have prayed and prayed that a he will come, and you are coming and you are a she. I will make you to a he," and then he laughed. A little later Babuji said, "I will call you Dhruva."

"Be Active in Inactivity"

JEANETTE WEINSTOCK, MASSACHUSETTS, USA

I feel Babuji's presence with me daily. The first time I met Babuji was in Hellerup, Denmark in 1976. The following year we went to Shahjahanpur and took a bus from the ashram to Babuji's home. As I approached, Babuji was sitting in front of his room and he stood up to greet me. I was amazed and thought that it was respect for my white hair. He then motioned with his right arm for me to sit in the chair beside him. I was overwhelmed.

On my second or third visit, Babuji told me, "I understand you because you speak slowly." In time I offered to ask Babuji a question for Paule Fleury, the French preceptor. But she said, "but I do not understand your English." She then pointed to a South African brother and said, "I understand his English." He refused to be the go-between.

One evening at the ashram Paule felt very tired, but had to stay awake until midnight to transmit to her group satsangh in France. I told her that my son Fred, also a preceptor, had told me that Babuji had told him that he could transmit to our satsangh at any time. Paule said she would not do this without Babuji's permission.

Next morning, Babuji asked, "Does anyone want to ask me a question?" I looked at her, she nodded yes, we looked at our South African brother and we had no alternative. The three of us approached. I asked, he interpreted, she had her answer. The question she asked was, "When do I transmit to my centre from here?" And Babuji included something for me in the question which relieved me of a guilt feeling I had for forty-six years, since I was sixteen, he said, "Any time, even in the toilet."

Thanking God in a place like the bathroom had never felt appropriate to me, yet now Babuji was giving me permission to even transmit

from there. So many times now when I am doing my morning meditation I find myself continuing there and recalling Babuji's answer and feeling His presence.

And then there was the story Dr. Harnam Singh told us about Babuji. It seems that whenever Dr. Singh left on a trip he would visit Babuji first and when he told Babuji that he was going to Canada to visit his son, Babuji said, "Speak!"

Dr. Singh thought, "Who is there to speak to?" Then Tom Whitlam, on his way from Vancouver, invited Dr. Singh's son, Raj Mangat in Toronto, to the first annual US gathering of Sahaj Marg at our home in Pennsylvania. We had prayed for Babuji to visit the US, and when Dr. Singh arrived with Tom Whitlam we felt that Babuji had sent his emissary.

I took down some quotes of Babuji's that were on the residence and kitchen walls of the ashram in Shahjahanpur, "Give me room in the cabin of your heart. To go on reminding you of the cabin of the hermit." "Constant remembrance is not felt but it is done." "Be active in inactivity." "Feel and live in remembrance of divine." "Feeling is the language of God."

I remember Kamlesh Patel calling us at midnight of April 19, 1983 to notify of us of Babuji's passing. Next morning while driving on a highway a vision of Babuji rode with me covering the whole expanse of the countryside from my left across the front windshield to the right. My heart swelled with joy feeling His presence so close and all enveloping. I had known that he had not left us.

"Do Your Duty"

IVOR BROWNE, DUBLIN, IRELAND

When we arrived at Babuji's home the contrast to the dirt and chaos of the streets of Shahjahanpur was a relief. Inside the big iron gate was a clean, spacious courtyard with a well and pump in the centre, and the atmosphere of the whole place was quiet and serene. Babuji was sitting in his chair with people around him. I remember he just glanced up briefly when we arrived, but otherwise remained absorbed in himself, apparently oblivious to everything else.

I felt that I had arrived 'home', and would never want to leave again, then Babuji came down to the gate to see that we be driven to the ashram. He said it was dangerous on the roads at night because of dacoits. This was our first experience of his scrupulous civility and the importance he placed on proper etiquette and service to others.

After satsangh next morning we were called to go to the cottage for a sitting with Babuji. When we entered I remember noticing that he had a rose covered with his kurta and every now and then he smelt it through the cotton as if the direct scent would be too strong. "Start meditation," he said. After some time I became aware of an overpowering scent of banks of flowers. When he said, "That's all" and I opened my eyes, there were no flowers in the room, except the single rose under his garment. Around this time, I remember seeing him in the meditation hall after satsangh, bathed in light, but none of this made much impression on me, I must have been so closed off from my heart.

On one of our visits to his house, June asked him whether he could help me with some big problems I was facing at the time. Babuji usually sat in a reverie, but when asked a direct question, he came right out of Himself and focused intently. "Now, I don't know the circumstances of

your life," he said "what I would say to you is 'do your duty." I was disappointed, here was this great Master and that was all the advice he could give me.

Still, for a good many years after that I was astonished to find that every time a question came up and I was faced with alternatives, the statement "do your duty" echoed and I knew the course of action I had to follow. And of course it was almost always the very thing I didn't want to do or face up to. Unfortunately, there came a time when I did not follow this advice, and had to suffer the consequences. Only very gradually I think was this emphasis on duty replaced by love as a guidance for action. Now, with the benefit of hindsight, I am amazed at the wisdom and power of these three words.

Babuji was loveably childlike. One day as I watched Malin with her wizened little face, preparing Babuji's hookah, I said to him, "She must be very old?" He said, "Yes, she's nearly eighty," and added with a child's pride, "I am eighty-one."

Once, we brought Babuji a present of a magnifying glass which had a light in it which shone on whatever it was focused upon. And for about half an hour he sat on the floor of his cottage examining everything with the glass, exactly as a child would do. He was a person who, in a super-conscious state, could deal with concepts beyond philosophy, or higher physics, and yet at a human level was as innocent and curious as a small child.

A year later we met Babuji in Denmark. I recall in Copenhagen I felt a change in the atmosphere as we approached the house in which he stayed. I later came to recognise that as transmission. It was on that visit that we first met Parthasarathi. I remember he was in the hall outside the room where Babuji was resting. He had a rug around his shoulders and was shivering with the cold. He was so friendly, and when June tried to pronounce his name, he told her, "Call me Chari."

Babuji had a great sense of humour but his jokes always contained a serious meaning. One such 'joke' came when a group of us were discussing over-population and family planning. Babuji said quietly, "The only form of family planning which can work is liberation." We all laughed at the joke, but of course it is the only truth when you think about it.

I remember when a young hippie who had gone badly astray on drugs (he was the son of one of the Danish abhyasis), came to visit Babuji. To our alarm he roughly pushed his way forward and sat up too close on the couch beside Babuji. Babuji calmly took part of his blanket and placed it gently around the young fellow, even tucked it in, and went on smoking his hookah. Then the boy reached rudely across Master and snatched a chocolate. Babuji lifted the large box and placed it so that the boy could help himself. I was moved by the way Babuji treated the boy, responding as though the boy's behaviour were quite appropriate. Without a word he had taught the perfect lesson.

During his last visit to Paris in August 1982 Babuji Maharaj was almost moribund, unable to rise from his bed. On a couple of occasions he came into the hall looking so feeble, but nevertheless standing up quite straight. Three times he stumbled on his way up to the front, and my heart ached as he struggled along. "This is terrible," I thought, "it's like Christ on His way to Calvary."

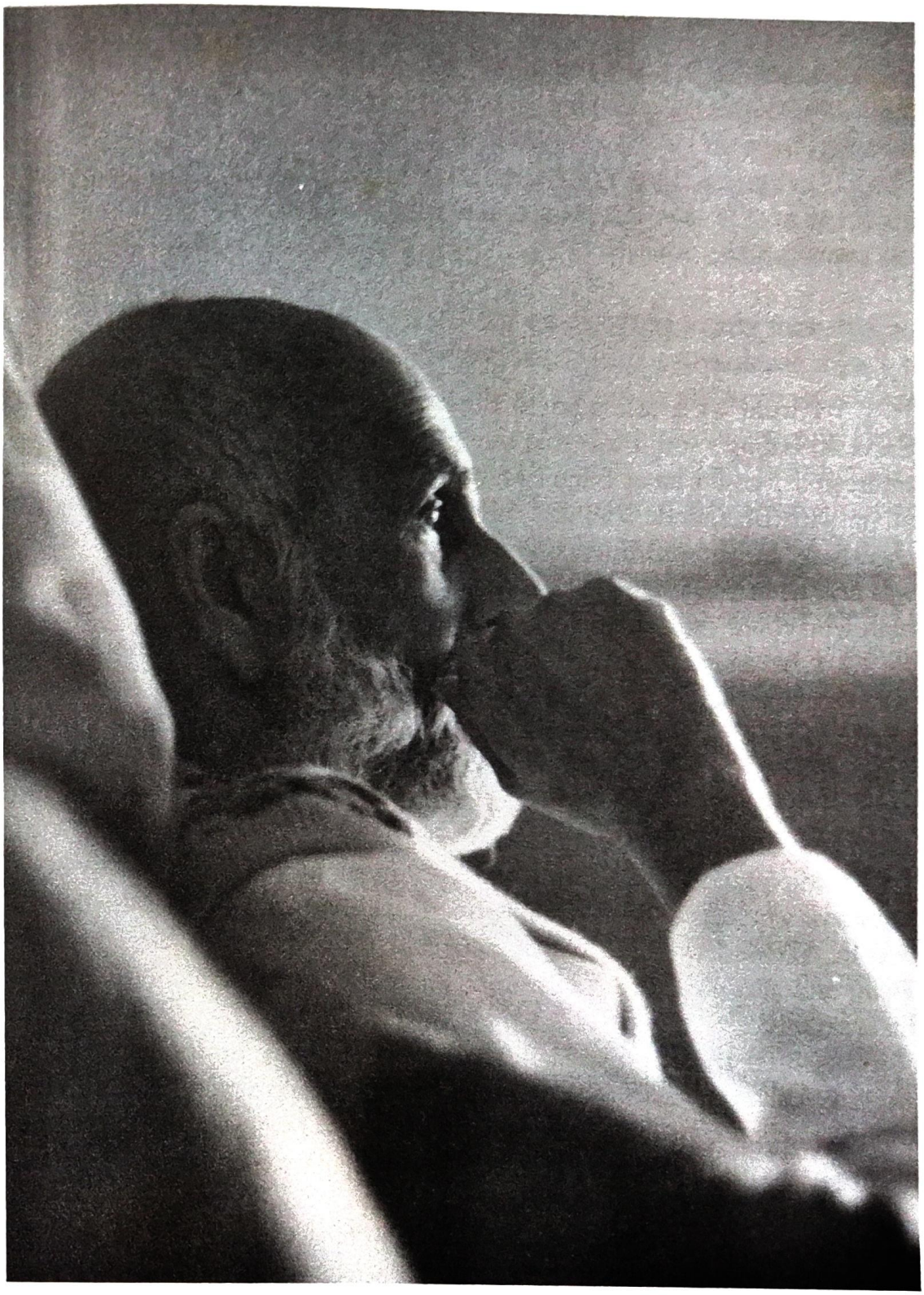
We were staying in the same building as Babuji. June was sick all the week, in the room directly above his and only able to get up once or twice. Within a day or two everyone seemed to disappear. With June in bed I felt totally isolated and got quite paranoid. I became convinced that no one wanted anything to do with me. At the same time all the 'big wigs' were strutting about, politicking and deciding how they would run the Mission and divide up different countries and areas of influence among themselves. Andre Poray was making speeches as if he was the new master. Only Chariji took no part in this. While others were engaged in politics he cared for Babuji and gave sittings until late at night.

My negative feelings kept getting worse until before dawn on Thursday when I woke up in utter despair. I felt Sahaj Marg was corrupt and useless. But what could I go back to? That morning I reached such a low point of despair in my life. Then when Friday came, everyone started to emerge out of nowhere, as if a great black cloud were lifting. June felt better. That night we had a concert with people singing and playing music.

Much later it became clear to me that Babuji so sick, had been carrying out deep cleaning on more than a thousand people. And it struck me how pathetically limited was my life's work in psychotherapy compared

to the extraordinary power and capacity of a spiritual Master of such a calibre.

My final memory of Babuji Maharaj is of the afternoon when He was leaving France for the last time. He came out into the sunshine to sit with us for a little while before being driven away. Chariji had done him proud, he gleamed from head to toe, like a child on his first day at school. Our usual circle around him stood back a little so as not to crowd him. And then a little boy of perhaps four years old came and stood in front of Babuji. He had platinum blond hair and such fair skin and blue eyes, contrasting beautifully with Babuji's deep eyes and brown skin. The two of them stared intently at each other for what seemed a timeless moment, the small boy wholly absorbed with rapture and Babuji's eyes full of love. The scene is alive in me. Then Babuji was taken away in a car and I never saw him again.



"Try to Depend Upon Me"

P.K. ARORA, BAREILLY, U.P., INDIA

I went as a salesman to Shahjahanpur to sell a tractor to Shri Sarvesh, Babuji's son. I was told that Sarvesh was not at home but if I was interested I could meet Babuji Maharaj who was sitting on the verandah along with Br. Gunde Rao and other abhyasis. When I told Babuji why I was there, he showed interest like a child's, and asked me what a tractor was and what was it used for. And so I tried to explain about a tractor to a man who could explain even the structure of an atom.

I became an abhyasi after this meeting in 1979, without being asked or having read any Mission literature. Bareilly being so near to Shahjahanpur I used to visit his house at least twice a month and in the short years until his mahasamadhi in 1983 I felt very close to Him and used to think that His love for me was immense. He was Love incarnate who loved one and all.

My practice of visiting him continued until the last. I went to Lucknow when he was in Vivekanand Hospital and also to Delhi when he was in AIMS. I was in Shahjahanpur when His body was brought from Delhi and also next day at His funeral and also at the *othala* ceremony at his residence.

I used to arrive at Shahjahanpur on Sunday mornings at about eight o'clock and on a few occasions stayed the whole day in his house and took food with him. I had one pertinent question I wanted to ask him but always forgot until my return home. Then I would remember it again and promise myself to ask him next time.

One day I was sitting near Babuji's chair when a European lady visited him and started asking him questions to which Babuji was giving very precise and short replies. Then the lady asked Babuji Maharaj the

question which had haunted me for months, "How is it possible that God comes to know that at a particular time a particular abhyasi needs His help and help reaches the abhyasi immediately?" The only difference between her question and mine was that I would have said "you" instead of "God."

Babuji replied, "It is not God who comes to help at that particular time but it is the will power of God which is behind every abhyasi and comes to his or her help at the time of need."

Another time I was sitting with Babuji when a lady from Meerut visited him and told him, "Babuji Maharaj I have surrendered myself to you." She used the word 'surrender' many times. Babuji kept on smiling, listening to her without saying a word and finally when she had gone inside the house to meet his daughter-in-law, Babuji said, "Did you hear her say 'I have surrendered, I have and I have?' I tell you there can be no surrender while there is 'I'." After a while he said, "Look Arora, surrender is a very difficult thing and hardly a few can do it, but I tell you an easy way to surrender, try to depend upon me and that will lead you to surrender. Try to depend upon me and just see the fun."

After about two years of sadhana I went to Shahjahanpur to collect "C" forms from two shops there. I went straight to Babuji's residence at about a quarter past eight in the morning. Three hours later when Babuji went into his house for lunch, I remembered that I had come to collect the forms and I rushed off to the shops and collected them. I went back to Babuji and stayed at his house until six o'clock and when I took his permission to leave he asked, "Has your work been done?"

I immediately said that I had come to see him only. He repeated his question, adding, "You needed some white, white thing from somebody." He was seeing the "C" forms printed on white paper. I said again, "No Sir, I came simply to see you." Finally, Babuji laughed and went into his room.

As soon as I came out of Babuji's iron gate I remembered about the forms in my pocket. So the Old Man knew what work I had come to do and got it made ready for me, which work was pending with those shopkeepers for more than two and a half years.

How innocent Babuji could be at times. I was in Shahjahanpur when Babuji's driver told him that the tyres on the car had to be retreaded. Babuji asked how long this would take. I said three or four days. Babuji was

concerned that the car would be out of use all that time. So I said to send one tyre at a time. Babuji could not believe me that the car could be running while the stepnee was not there and he went with me to the car to check that there was an extra wheel called stepnee.

When I was alone with Babuji Maharaj, I asked, "You claim that you only work on the spiritual aspect of life while I feel that you are watching very closely my worldly life also?"

Babuji said, "No, this is not correct."

When I tried to point out to him how he had been helping me at every step of my daily life, he smiled and raised both hands over his head and said, "It Is not my concern. It is Lalaji's grace," and slowly, he went into his room.

"This is a Leniency I Have Given to Ladies"

K.V. GOURI, COIMBATORE, INDIA

In 1975 I arrived in Shahjahanpur with my husband and daughter. Babuji Maharaj asked my husband, "Where did you come from?" My husband said, "We are coming from Coimbatore, after visiting Agra, Benares and other places." Babuji Maharaj, who seemed somewhat angry about so many visits, asked, "Why did you come here? Why don't you do your idol worship?" My husband said, "Master I am not doing idol worship but I am reading only Ramayana daily." "What do you get from it?" Babuji asked. "Why don't you continue it?" My husband said, "It brought me to you." Then Master said, "All right, sit down." He gave us all a sitting for half an hour.

In the evening Babuji Maharaj went to the ashram which was under construction. There he asked my husband, "How is the water?" and he added, "It tastes like Ganga pani, water from the Ganges!" He was in a happy mood. All of us tasted the water and nodded our heads, meaning that it was indeed like Ganga water!

During the next day I told Babuji Maharaj, that I could not do meditation in the early morning since I was busy sending my husband to the office and children to school. Babuji Maharaj asked me, "At what time all of them go out?" "Master, I will be free by nine thirty AM," I replied. Babuji Maharaj said, "You take a cup of tea or milk, after nine thirty AM and then do the meditation. This is a leniency I have given to ladies." Babuji went inside and told his granddaughter, Nini, to prepare coffee for us and not tea. He also told her to prepare lunch without onions and garlic.

When my husband passed away, all of us felt lonely and dejected. At that time, my youngest daughter, Shobana, wrote a letter to Babuji Maharaj about our condition, and requested his permission to visit

Shahjahanpur. Babuji Maharaj wrote, "You are always welcome. Meanwhile you can approach Shri Parthasarathi, the general secretary of our Mission in Madras. He will do the needful."

Another time my daughter, Sister Shobana, Sister Anasuya, Sister Rama Devi another abhyasi and Sister Sunderammal and myself went to Shahjahanpur. Once my daughters prepared *morekulambu* (a preparation with curd) and *paruppurandai* (a preparation with *dhal*). Babuji liked it very much and told Sister Shobana to teach his granddaughter Nini how to prepare it there.

After satsangh we were talking about constant remembrance. Babuji Maharaj said, "Suppose you have to attend on your husband who goes to the office, your child going to school, and another child is sick, will you be always attending the sick child sitting by its side and ignoring others or vice versa? You will be attending on all of them. Similarly you have the thought of God in your mind, and do the work."

We invited Babuji Maharaj to come to Coimbatore. He asked about the water problem. We said, "Master it is so-so, we don't feel the problem. We also spend and use water thriftily." At this he smiled gracefully and said that he would come. The acute water problem is now over! Many dams like Aththikkaduvu, and additional tanks for Siruvani water have been built.

Just at our departure I asked him, "Any message for us?" He said, "Whenever you cook, think that you are cooking for the grace of the Lord. Then it becomes prasad, not only for abhyasis, but also for others who take this food."

In 1982, Sister Anasuya, her husband Br. V. Ramachandran, his brother Gopalakrishnan and myself went to Shahjahanpur. The next day we got permission to meet Babuji Maharaj in his house. At that time he was having lunch. But he was not serious in taking his food; instead he was deeply engrossed in some thought. Perhaps he was thinking of Chariji. Exactly at that time, Chariji arrived with Sister Sulochana. Babuji Maharaj got up from his plate, and without even washing his hand, rushed out and hugged Chariji, saying, "Parthasarathi! You have come?" The scene was something uniquely beautiful. I am at a loss of words to express it! Was that the union of Lord Krishnaji and Radhaji and all of us around gopis?

"May God Live in You"

FAUSTO RUSSO, PADOVA, ITALY

I met Babuji Maharaji for the first time in Rome in June 1976, six months after I became an abhyasi. He came accompanied by Chariji, and I travelled from Napoli where I lived.

When I went into Master's room, I immediately felt a state of wonder and reverence and that I was meeting somebody I had known since all eternity.

After a while I started asking him a few questions. One was whether evil forces really existed or not. He said that there was no such a thing as evil, but the human beings coming down from their original condition had generated evil forces. The next day I was made a preceptor which was another unexpected and wonderful experience.

After three days with him I had to leave to rejoin military service. We were in Latina in the Rizzo's house. Just before leaving I was in such a state of sadness that I broke down in tears before him. He said, "Military service is good for the discipline," but it didn't help me to bear the pain of separation. Then he invited me to visit him in India the next year.

Chariji has written that he asked Babuji how he was able to create this condition in an abhyasi who had seen him for the first time only a few days back, "It is Lalaji's grace," he answered.

I visited Babuji in India with my wife Tiziana in November '77. The trip to Shahjahanpur was quite difficult because in our eagerness to reach Babuji we had taken the first train from Delhi to Bareilly the same night of our arrival in India. We had hoped to catch a connection to Shahjahanpur from there, but when we reached Bareilly the train had already left. We looked for a bus, but at that time there was a big language difficulty so we got into the wrong bus, then we had to get out somewhere and take

another bus that somebody had indicated, hoping it was the right one. It was becoming dark and we were very tired from the long trip and at one stage we did not know whether we were going the right way at all. Our confusion increased as the villagers on the bus continued to ask us whether we wanted to go to Shahjahanpur or Saranpur. We were wondering where we were going to spend the night in this unknown country when suddenly the driver stopped and we were told that we had to get out. We were just in front of the ashram's gate in Shahjahanpur and somebody came to welcome us!

We felt immediately at home and in that divine atmosphere all our tiredness and burdens dissolved at once. He had conducted us to His very door. We spent ten days with Babuji going every morning to have sittings in his room. Once He started the sitting and went out of the room. He came back after half an hour or so to say 'that's all'. Obviously He could work on us from wherever while He was attending to other things.

The days were filled with grace and deep inner transformation. The atmosphere was always divinely charged. We spoke very little, most of the time He was silent and totally absorbed in Himself with his hookah as his only companion. One day I put him quite a childish question, "What will happen after the *mahapralaya*?" He looked at me innocently and said, "Nobody knows."

In those days we could hear many wonderful stories about Babuji from his assistant at that time, Gunde Rao. I did not hear these tales from Babuji but I believe that Rao must have heard some of them from him in the years spent in Shahjahanpur. Here are a few:

Babuji was in Ceylon for some spiritual work. One day he visited another spiritual organisation, but the followers of this organisation were quite closed and unfriendly to him. Suddenly the founder of that Mission, at that time already departed, appeared to Master ashamed by the behaviour of his followers and asked Babuji to destroy what remained of the organisation. Immediately, Lalaji intercommuned saying, "Leave it, we are not here to destroy but to build." So Master left.

An abhyasi in France wanted to publish some book of Master's but the publisher refused. Then it seems that after some time the man called back the abhyasi saying that an old Indian man with a beard had visited

him explaining the utility of the system and he was now convinced to publish the book. The abhyasi wrote this to Master and he replied that as he was sincere he had wanted to help him.

One day an abhyasi in south India was cooking something and he had an intense wish for Master to taste the food. Suddenly Babuji appeared saying, "This time I have come but please don't call me again."

A disciple of Lalaji's wrote asking whether on the way to Fatehgarh he could go to visit him with a friend. Lalaji replied that he could come, but alone, leaving the friend at the railway station. After a few months the disciple asked Lalaji the reason. Lalaji said that his friend was not genuine as he had tried to kill the abhyasi several times and Lalaji had protected him each time.

I saw Babuji again in Munich in 1980. What I remember most of that meeting was the moment I went to say good bye to Him. I went close to him with joined hands and told him that I was leaving. Then he looked at me and in a low voice He blessed me, "May God live in you." It was as if a river of grace had flooded my heart. I became unaware of the crowd of abhyasis around and was suddenly totally alone with Him, drowned in the divine gift of His words. I feel that at that moment something changed forever in me.

Those were the last words he spoke to me because when I met Him for the last time in Paris in 1982, I did not have the opportunity to be near him. When he left the campus, I wept bitterly, feeling that I would never meet him again in this physical existence.

I have wondered for many years how I could justify such a blessing as meeting such a divine Master. I felt totally undeserving. The mystery was solved one day by Chariji, "It is not a question of deserving, it is a question of belonging."

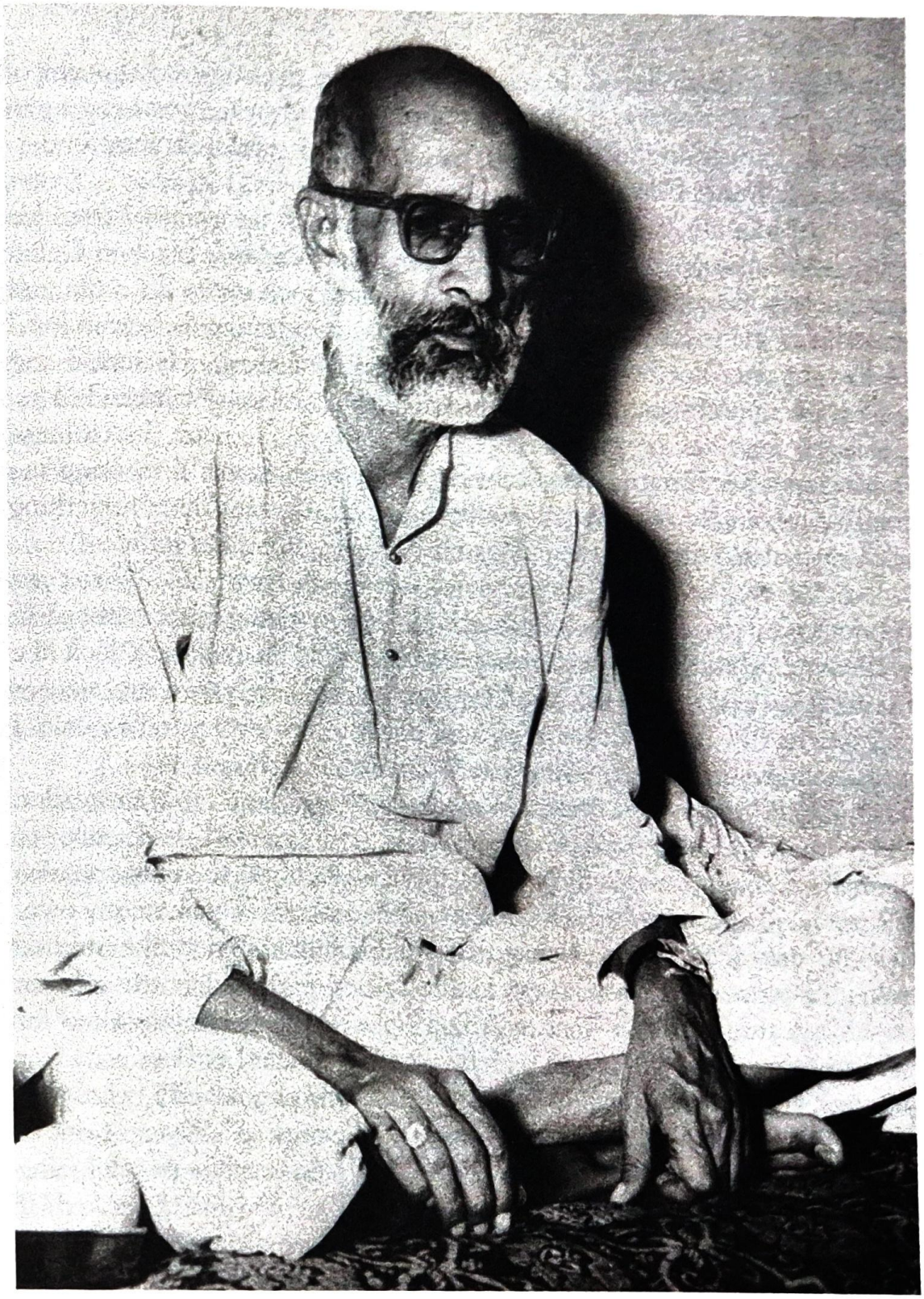
"What We Cannot Cure, You Can Cure"

KAMLESH KAPUR, NEW DELHI, INDIA

I did not have much reverence for gurus until I came in contact with Babuji. In fact, I had decided to give myself a certain period of time to see if there was anything worthwhile in the system, half ready to reject it. But Babuji got a hold of me and within a week of my starting the abhyas, I had a taste of that peace which my being was unconsciously seeking as if something which had been simmering all along was cooled and still, without any movement. I was ready to try the system in earnest. And Babuji became the guiding force in my life.

By the time I came into the Mission, Babuji had already withdrawn into Himself and talked very little and softly, one had to strain to catch the words, so I did not have that much verbal contact with him, it was more a heart to heart contact. It was a blessing in disguise because I tried to hold on to Him at that level. I tasted his love, generosity, kindness and grace which left a permanent mark on me.

In those days, I was passing through a phase of sickness and would often lie awake at night feeling unwell, lonely and lost. On one occasion, I started thinking of Babuji and I felt he was sitting beside my pillow with his hand on my forehead asking me to go back to sleep. Soon I slept and when I woke up in the morning, the whole experience remained alive and real. One of my relatives who had died a year earlier came to me in a dream and I was frightened, instinctively my thoughts turned to Babuji and He was there. I saw Him draw a circle of protective light around me. The experience was so real that I could not pass it off as imagination. After that, whenever I needed Him and called out to Him, he was there with His soothing gentle loving touch. In becoming dependent on Him I also started feeling deeper changes within myself. Babuji's miracle of human



transformation had begun. In learning to live in the constant thought of the divine, suffering was a very small price to pay for what I was getting in exchange. "Suffering is the breaking shell that encloses your understanding." (Kahlil Gibran.)

In May 1977, about a month after I joined, he returned from his trip to Malaysia and I went to meet him at Br. Sundara's place in Delhi. Fortunately, Babuji was alone and Mrs. Sundara took me to his room and introduced me to him. He gave me an intense penetrating look from head to toe not once but twice before he answered my *namaste*. He smiled and after a few minutes got up from his bed and came and sat down beside Mrs. Sundrara and me on the carpet. He looked at me with his intense fathomless eyes. That glance seemed to cut through me, unnerving me totally, robbing me of my confidence. At the same time something magnetic passed through me, pulling my being. I was hooked for life.

Gently, he talked about some doctor who had said, "What we cannot cure, you can cure." That was his way of giving me a message in such an unassuming way concerning what He could do, making it look like the most natural thing. I felt small for having doubted my own experiences and touched by his greatness in coming down to my level to talk to me. I was very moved and overwhelmed by his love and kindness.

Another incident is vivid in my memory regarding His transmission power and the effect in produces in us. One time, I had gone to Shahjahanpur with two or three people from Delhi. I was the only one who did not have a return train reservation and had to travel back on my own. On the day of departure I was told that Babuji did not like women travelling alone and I was to go to the station early. I left the ashram around six thirty PM and went to Babuji's place. The rickshaw waited for me with my luggage as I sat on a chair on the veranda. I did not send any message, and just waited while Babuji talked on the phone and I heard him say, "I will talk later as someone is waiting for me outside." He came out of his room and looking deep into my eyes said, "I do not like people going alone at night." "How can I be alone when you are with me?" I asked. If anyone was surprised by those words it was myself. My heart felt, my mouth uttered them, but they had not come from my head. Babuji gave me a penetrating look from a distance of less than twelve inches. That

look seemed to go deep inside me and I felt something had happened. What, I did not know.

After that moment I was not my usual self. On the train station I waited, a woman alone for four hours. Looking around I could only see rustic men having tea or smoking *bidis* at the stalls, but my mind was not functioning and suddenly the lights on the platform went off and it was pitch dark just when the train was due to arrive. How on earth was I going to locate my compartment, and this was not a corridor train. Then the train came and my compartment was right in front of me, the conductor called out my name. Only after reaching home I realised that Babuji had taken possession of everything after I uttered the words, "How can I be alone when you are with me." And to this day I can see Him looking into my eyes.

In Babuji's last days, I had regularly been visiting the hospital and later the clinic where Babuji was admitted. One morning I started feeling very restless and the feeling became unbearable. I decided to go to the clinic where Babuji was even though I had been there the day before.

When I arrived in an auto rickshaw, Br. Govind Rao was standing outside with a very sad face. He took some time before he told me, "Babuji has left us."

I went in to where Babuji's body was lying and stood in a daze looking at him. I was the first person to reach there as if Babuji had summoned me because the time of my feeling so restless and his *mahasamadhi* coincided so that I had felt compelled to visit him.

Later, we accompanied his body to Shahjahanpur and just before the cremation I passed with others to have my last glimpse of him. When I was close I touched his feet which I had never done earlier because he did not like it and when I came out of the hall, to my surprise, I found a flower sticking out from in between my fingers. It had got there without my knowledge, His last blessing.

Once my heart accepted Babuji without reservation, I just took everything that He gave naturally and stopped dwelling on the smallest things. He is always there. So many times when my eyes happen to fall on his photograph, I get a shock for His eyes look back at me with intense loving compassion seeing through me as His smile lights his face. May His graceful and loving presence always guide us.

"The Mistakes are Mine"

C.R.N. MURTHY, BANGALORE, INDIA

My experience of Babuji started out even before seeing him physically. Immediately after joining the Mission in January 1975 I attended Basant celebrations in Bangalore and I had to go about eleven or twelve kilometres to attend the satsangh. I didn't hear the alarm going off and suddenly I was shaken by the thigh. I woke up and saw the time was six o'clock. I asked my wife, "Did you wake me up?" "No," she said. "Somebody woke me by shaking my thigh," I said. Then I just brushed my teeth, and went off on my scooter to the satsangh, and was there on time. I didn't realise the significance of this until the following year, when I visited Shahjahanpur for Basant. When I heard the others talking about such experiences, I realised it was Babuji who had woken me up from my sleep, so that I did not miss Basant puja.

February 6th, 1976 was when the ashram in Shahjahanpur was inaugurated. I had left my luggage in one of the halls where I would sleep. I was lying down thinking, "Oh, Babuji, when will you give me *darshan*?" when an abhyasi said, "Anybody that wants to go to Babuji's house, there's a car going." So, immediately I went with them in the car. When we arrived, Babuji was standing there in the middle of the portico, all set to come to the ashram, with his walking stick, and the cap on. I said, "Namaste," and he responded by saying, "Namaste." That was my first impression of Babuji and I felt so much happiness. Then later on, he left for the ashram and so did I. I was working as a volunteer.

On the day of the ashram inauguration, Babuji came up the steps to cut the tape. I was trying to regulate the crowd, not allowing the abhyasis to come up onto the platform. As I was standing there one of the other abhyasis said, "You follow Babuji." I said, "No, no, no." He said, "I

will stand here, you go follow Him." So, then, I followed Babuji. The general secretary and so many others were behind him. He came and cut the tape. Then I followed Babuji onto the dais and was seated to his right. Then, when the function was about to begin, all of a sudden, I started sobbing like a child, it was uncontrollable, tears rolled down my eyes just like an ocean. So brother Gunde Rao, pulled me close to him and must have done the work that was necessary.

After the Basant function was over, we stayed there for another two to three days. The first time I went to his house, he was sitting inside his room. I just waited on the veranda I think he was squatting near the telephone, perhaps he was expecting a telephone call, and someone came and gave me a shawl and said, "You go and put it over his shoulders." I took the shawl and went into his room, and put it around him. He just looked up at me, you see. The moment he looked at me, I started to cry and tears rolled down.

And then we went to his house to say goodbye. He was so very loving and said, "You must go to the railway station early; after eight o'clock, it is dangerous to travel. It's better you go early." Though the train was at twelve o'clock, he said, "Go at eight." He followed us up to the gate to see us off. It was so difficult to leave Shahjahanpur.

In 1980 I again went to Shahjahanpur. Though I had sent my name in as a volunteer, I found that the volunteer badge was not available. It seemed that I was not needed anywhere. I got a job looking after the chappels at the meditation hall and I was wearing the volunteer badge on my jerkin when an abhyasi came and said, "The general secretary wants a volunteer at Babuji's cottage, please go there." So I rushed to the Master's cottage and found the general secretary standing by the door. He said, "Stand here, regulate the people waiting near Babuji's cottage." So I stood there on duty for the next four days as a doorkeeper. I would stand there doing duty from five AM and I was still standing at eleven o'clock, midnight. I never felt any strain or fatigue, it was such a pleasant experience. And then at the cottage I used to keep the door slightly open to have the *darshan* of Master. Some of the people would suddenly close the door, but immediately someone else would open it. So I stood at the door of my Master and I had *darshan*, and I had the feeling that He was

taking me on a long journey as I stood there, through the ages, as if passing through them.

During that period, I could see how people in his presence melted, just five minutes, just one look from Babuji, and they'd melt like ice, crying, crying, crying; tears rolling down their faces uncontrollably. Even brawny fellows crying did not feel shy. Once a preceptor came and said, "Babuji, I have built a house. Next time you come you must visit the house, it is your house." He went on telling so many things, but Babuji never said a word. The man pleaded, "It is your house; I built a house, when you come next time to my place you must visit me, please, it is your house." But Babuji never said a word. In the evening, another preceptor came. Babuji asked him, "Have you completed your house?" "Yes, Babuji." "Have you got one room for me?" "Yes, Babuji, I have reserved one room for you," he said. He had never opened his mouth about his house, but still, Babuji asked. It only showed me that what he wanted was from the heart.

Then, during that period he sent for an abhyasi from Madras and they sat near his cottage, and Babuji asked, "Have you read my books?" "Yes, Babuji." "Which book is the best, do you think?" The abhyasi told him about some book. Babuji said, "The best book I have written is 'Ten Commandments—*Commentary on the Ten Commandments*'; the best book I have written," he said. "It was written in three hours. I was speaking, somebody was writing." Then He said, "The mistakes are mine; the work is Lalaji's."

During that period, I had the occasion to take Babuji round the ashram when he wanted to go out. The last night before he left for home, I was there and when he went to bed, I could go and cover him with a shawl and all that, and He inquired of me whether I had bedding. I had shawl, blankets and everything, for sleeping in the other room, loving and tender care was taken.

"They Will be Rebuking Me"

D. SABITHA DEVI, COIMBATORE, INDIA

Our stay in Shahjahanpur was arranged in a *shamiyana*. Rain had started during the evening *satsangh* and an abhyasi sister and myself went to see whether our bedding had become wet. I was angry, afraid and crying and I blamed myself for having come to such a far off place, with faith in an unknown person. Now our bedding was wet; would that person come to see us at least when we suffered in the cold? He was staying safely inside His cottage. These were the thoughts running in my head. I was sitting in the tent crying, and thinking that he had no concern for us.

At daybreak we went to the canteen to take coffee. Sister Sulochana came out. When she saw me, she said, "Babuji was very anxious yesterday night. He said, 'Abhyasis who have come here with so much faith in me are suffering in the rain. They will be rebuking me. Why did you put me in this room, not allowing me to go out?' He felt very sad when he said this." I was wonderstruck, how did he know about my thoughts? And moreover, why should Mami address me? We were all in the meditation hall after satsangh. All of a sudden I felt that somebody had crushed my heart. I was not able to control my tears. After this, during my stay there, I neither wanted to go near Babuji or sit by his side on the lawn. He was looking somewhere else when Mami introduced us to him as abhyasis from Madras. But there was a lot of change both in my body and mind and I felt that my relationship with him was Divine. I also felt that I was born for Him. I returned as a new person from Shahjahanpur.

Following his Malaysian trip, Babuji came to Madras for a function. Something attracted me to him and it was beyond physical presence, both when I saw him in *Gayathri* and when he conducted a satsangh at the community hall. He stayed in Umesh's house. I had a dream in which he

was holding my children very close to him and looked into me deeply. I cannot express that scene in words! It left a deep urge in me to go and see him. I had never been in Umesh's house before but I went alone and stood before the gate! Babuji Maharaj was sitting by the window as long as I was there. It was the same vision I saw in the dream. I just stood there spellbound, even without knowing how much time had passed. It must have been at least half an hour.

Even when he was unwell and all were praying for Him, I could not pray from my heart, but the condition of transmission I received was indescribable. Once I saw Babuji Maharaj standing near the cot on which I was lying in the daytime! It was not a dream or imagination. I could not ever feel sad for his absence. But the sadness, grief and loneliness from my childhood still persist. It will go away only when I can merge with that Divinity.

"No, No, I Won't Permit You People to Go"

SHIVALINGAPPA INGAGI, SEDAM, INDIA

In 1962, I went to Shahjahanpur for Basant Panchami. Babuji asked, "Why Shivalingappa have you taken tea?" "Babuji," I said, "I do not drink tea." He said, "There is breakfast also!" I was overwhelmed by his affection and went back and had breakfast, thinking of his concern and affection. I went to the backyard of his house and wept. How much love for a poor nobody like me! I could not contain myself. However, I wiped my tears and went and sat with the others. For six months after returning to the village that affectionate look, the soft voice full of love and concern came again and again in my mind and my eyes would become wet. "There is breakfast also," He drew me towards Him with these simple words and also it was like a *sanjeevni* (medicine) to help me in my practice of constant remembrance.

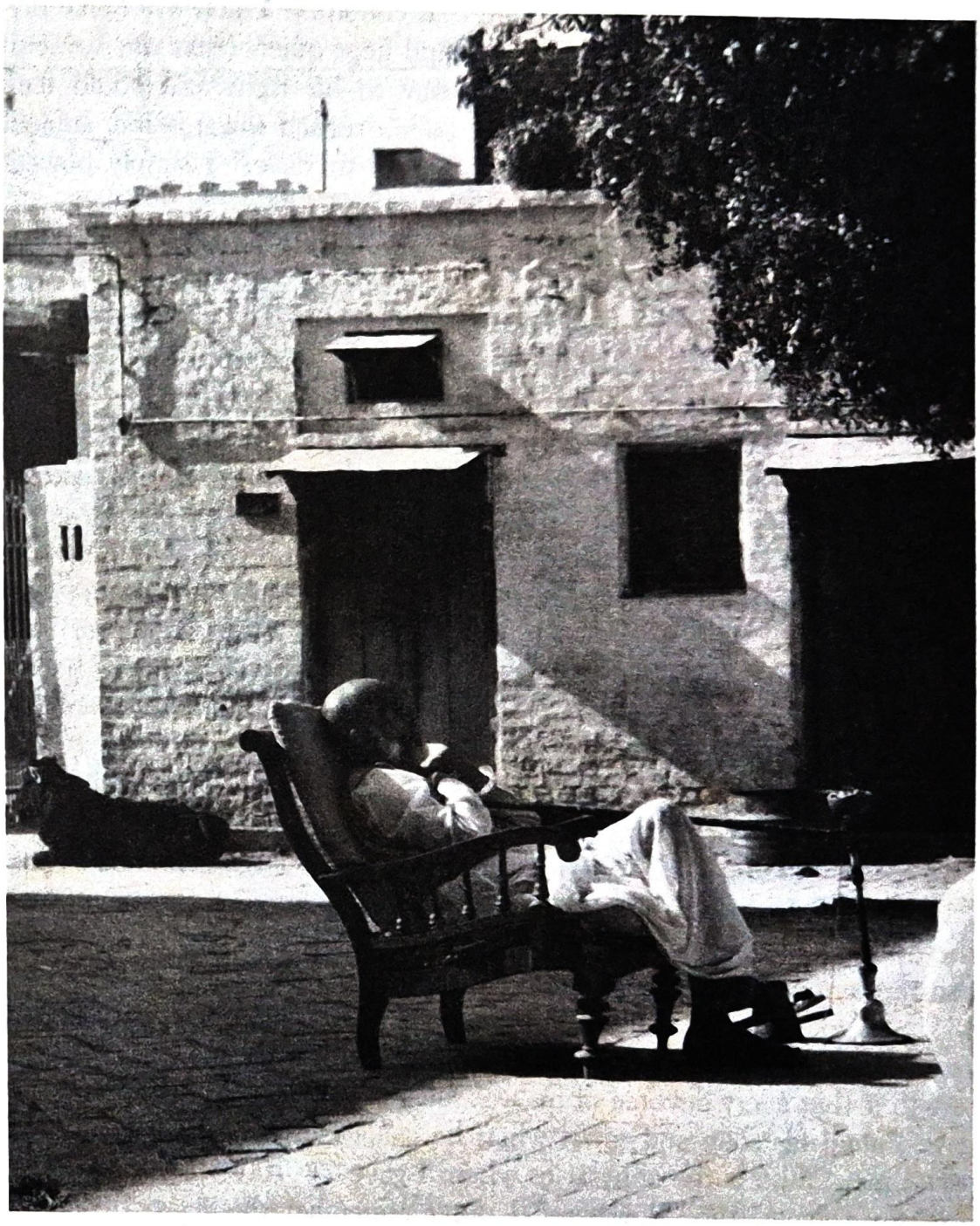
In 1964, after the Basant Utsav, some of us abhyasis went to take leave of Babuji Maharaj. Very lovingly he said, "No, no, I won't permit you people to go. The house is looking empty." We were wonder-struck by his love.

For the best part of twenty years, from 1962 I went almost yearly to Babuji in Shahjahanpur but lack of space prohibits my narrating all the experiences. I was present in 1968 when a satsanghi brought a good camera to Shahjahanpur. One day at eight AM, Babuji was doing some exercises in front of Br. Prakash's office. He was in a very good mood. Whatever poses he was making, the abhyasi was taking photos of all of them. Next day, when he got the negatives washed, he found that not a single snap came out properly. He asked Babuji why it was so. We came to know that he had not asked Babuji's permission so that is why the photos did not come out properly.

In Delhi I was in front of Babuji in 1969 when He asked me what time it was. I told him it was exactly nine AM. He said, "Now our C. Rajagopalachari (father of our Pujya Shri Parthasarathi) is giving a lecture in Rome and people of Rome are impressed by his lecture." Then he asked me, "Shivalingappa, do you know about the miracle that happened in London?" I said I didn't know. He said, "You know, our C. Rajagopalachari was going to visit his uncle in London. Before he reached London, a lady philosopher had a dream that one C. Rajagopalachari is coming to London on behalf of Shri Ram Chandra Mission. He is coming on such and such a train. Receive him and arrange for a lecture on Sahaj Marg practice. Accordingly, she went to the station, stood before the particular compartment. C.R.'s uncle had also come to receive him. So she told them, "Ram Chandraji of Sahaj Marg has informed me in my dream that I should make arrangements for Mr. Rajagopalachari's stay and also arrange for his lecture on Sahaj Marg." And the lecture on Sahaj Marg was a roaring success. See the Grace of Lalaji Maharaj.

August: 1st to 13th, 1978: I consider this was the golden period of my life. I reached Shahjahanpur around eight o'clock at night and went directly to him. After dinner, he introduced me to a few satsanghis and said, "This is Shivalingappa, one of the oldest abhyasis," and he asked me to stay with him. Next day, Br. Gunde Rao, went to his village and I took his place in the service of Babuji Maharaj. I stayed with him and ate with him. I was blessed to stay with him day and night. One day, Babuji refused to eat. I asked him the reason and he said, "I have a stomach pain. I don't feel well, you go and eat." I said I wouldn't eat if he didn't. He said he was not well, and so I should go and eat. I then requested him to lie down for a while and take a rest. He lay down and I started praying that whatever difficulty he was having, it should be removed. After ten minutes he got up and said, "Brother, how can I say you must pray for me?" Then both of us went and had our lunch though Babuji ate only half a *paratha* and a glass of buttermilk. I can never forget this incident.

One night he asked me to revive his hookah for him. With some difficulty, I understood this and filled up the hookah. I asked Babuji, "Master, you call this good for nothing fellow once in a blue moon. Even before this I have stayed with you. But I was satisfied just talking with you.



This time I beg of you, please give me that condition which will make my life meaningful." He just looked at me and kept quiet. Next day around eight thirty I was seated a distance away to his right and could feel transmission flowing. All of a sudden, Babuji turned towards me, smiled and said, "This is the condition you wanted to have." I simply bowed before him.

On 5th October 1980, Babuji gave a sitting at home. Then he asked me if I could remember the condition I had experienced in 1978. This shows how much interested he was in the progress of all his devotees. I left the ashram at ten AM and returned in the evening. Babuji came in the evening and gave a sitting. The next day I went to his house around one o'clock. Br. Gunde Rao told me, "Why, Babuji has been waiting for you since yesterday evening!" When Babuji was coming to the ashram at four, he said, "Take Shivalingappa in the car." I said, he has already gone back to the ashram. Again while returning he asked, "Has Shivalingappa sat in the car?" At night he was restless, asking me where Shivalingappa is, "I want to see him." And Gunde Rao smiled and asked me, "Are you attracting Babuji in some peculiar way?" I was dumbfounded when I heard this. At two PM I went into Babuji's room and sat on his cot like a child. He was full of affection. He said, "I wanted to give you Rs. 100/- as pocket money." I said, "By grace Babuji, I have money with me." He said, "No, you must have it." See how concerned he was about his devotees!

On October 10, 1980, after *satsangh*, French abhyasi Combe Evans said, "Babuji, I used to think that you are far away from us. But now I feel the distance has decreased. How to decrease it further?" Babuji said only constant remembrance could remove this distance.

Before lunch, Gunde Rao said, "Shivalingappa will eat here?" Babuji said, "He is one of us. If he doesn't eat here, where will he eat?" He saw to it that every devotee of his was filled with love. In the afternoon I gave Babuji his soap and towel when he came back from the toilet. He asked me, "Who is the abhyasi to whom I gave Rs 100/-? I have to give him some *dhotis*, too. Nowadays, I don't remember the name, work or place of people." I told him that I was the person to whom he gave the money. I returned to the ashram with Br. Krishnarjun.

Next day, I went to Babuji's house a little late after Br. Mimani and others from Calcutta had had a sitting. I bowed before him and he said, "Go and sit in the meditation room. I'll come." I was completely delighted by this. After lunch at the ashram I went to his house again. It seems he asked, "Where has Shivalingappa gone?" I sat before him. He asked me if my condition had changed. I said, "Yes Babuji." Gunde Rao said, "There is a lot of change in him. He told me, but is not telling you." Babuji said, "Why feel shy with me?" Later, I sat on his cot and was doing service to him. Babuji asked Gunde Rao to bring a pair of *dhotis* and gave them to me with love and affection. I bowed before Him. He asked, "do you like the *dhotis*?" I was filled with tears. I said, "How can a thing given by you, not be good?"

On 17th October 1980, Babuji Maharaj said, "Try to follow what I have taught and try to progress fast. After being with me, if you do not progress, it is no use." I was restless the following day before leaving Shahjahanpur and he made me sit on the cot and embraced me like a mother would embrace her child. He said, "I'm thinking of Sarnadji." I said, "He is in *layavastha* Babuji." He said, "Yes, he is a saint." I gave a good massage to Babuji and ate dinner with him. He was lying down when I took leave of him. I placed my head on his hands. He embraced me and blessed me; I left for Delhi.

"Always Close to the Heart"

LOLLY CHOPRA CHAWLA, STEINBACH, GERMANY

My first contact with Babuji was when I was an impressionable sixteen year old after which he stayed in my home many times. When he called me to him and asked what my name was I felt confused over what would be more appropriate, my given name Mala or Lolly which is what my parents called me. I opted for Mala, to have him ask whether I knew what it meant. My answer paled in comparison to the description he gave, "Something that is worn around the neck but is always close to the heart."

However, I deviate. The incident that I would like to share is related to Brother Don Sabourin, a Canadian abhyasi. It was in front of my eyes that I saw him die and Babuji bring him back to life. There were more than a hundred abhyasis on the lawns where pedestal fans were lined up on the flowerbeds. They were linked with the same electricity wire. The mood in our house was festive; the evening meditation had just been given by Babuji. The rains had come and the air was heavy and humid and concerned about Babuji's comfort, my father wished that a fan be placed next to him. It was Don who chose to perform that duty for Babuji. However, for some reason he chose to walk to the flowerbeds to retrieve a fan instead of opting for the one that was more conveniently located in the house.

Perhaps, it was the moisture in the flowerbeds or a badly connected wire, I do not know. I do remember that the fans were switched off. Whatever the reason, nobody was prepared for what transpired in the new few seconds. As Don reached over, a sharp burst of electricity caught him and pulled him to the fan. He was gripped by a massive shock that continued, and he could not let go of the metal pedestal fan. A strong wind caught a few of the abhyasis and flung them back a few feet. It was so

strong that even as they helplessly watched Don, they were lifted clear off the ground.

Though I was also caught in the wind I managed to scramble to my feet and run to where the electricity mains were located. Even though the floor was damp, I reached forward and pulled the wire with my bare hands so that the electric power was switched off. The meditation hall was immediately plunged into darkness and confused voices rose in a high pitched murmuring as I picked my way through the throng of abhyasis to where Don had fallen. Though the incident must have taken a good five minutes, they passed in a blur but I found my way to Babuji who was sitting quietly in the melee.

As I breathlessly explained the situation, he got up and cleared a way through the crowd to where the abhyasis had gathered around Don's body. As if to confirm my suspicion, Don's wife Jackie, a nurse, was sitting next to him. She had her fingers on his pulse and was sobbing quietly. She informed Babuji that Don was dead. The next few minutes are imprinted on my mind forever.

I can see Babuji's frail figure, as he sat down on his haunches just behind Don's head and closed his eyes as if he was in a deep trance. We all waited. It was a half hour later that Babuji opened his eyes, and Don who had been pronounced clinically dead, opened his eyes and looked at Babuji and said, "Thank you Babuji."

In hindsight, I do not think that any one of the hundred odd abhyasis from in and around New Delhi doubted the miracle that happened in front of their eyes. They were not told that Don had died as Babuji had instructed Jackie not to add to the confusion by announcing that. However, I do not think that there was any doubt about it as he lay on the damp ground.

Babuji then rose to offer *prasad* to Lalaji. Later in the evening, he revealed to my father, "Chopra Sahib, there was someone in the congregation who was trying to test me today." My father wondered why anyone would want to test the strength of his master. It was much later that a doctor arrived to examine Don who had emerged seemingly unscathed by the incident. However, the heat of the electric shock was so intense that his metal spectacle frames had been soldered together. The

doctor, who could not understand how Don had survived the shock without visible damage, instructed him not to catch his flight to Canada later in the evening. Don turned to Babuji who said quietly, "If you are going to lose money, then you must go. Otherwise, if the doctor says you should not travel, then don't."

So, against the doctor's advice Don went home and lived a spiritually fulfilled and happy life until 1997.

"My Dear Dawn..."

JACKIE SABOURIN, CHENNAI, INDIA

It is impossible to write about being with Babuji without mentioning my husband Don as we journeyed to our beloved Babuji together. Babuji always thought of us together. Whenever Don was with Babuji and I was not there, he would say that he was remembering me very much or that I was meditating and transmission was going to me. When I was there without Don, Babuji would say that since I'd come he had been thinking of Don a lot. Once he said that he should write to Don, "My Dear Dawn." Dawn described Don's condition, Babuji said. And He told Don, "Both of you are very good people. I do not know how you were so lucky to get each other." To me it will always be Master's blessings that brought us together.

I first met Babuji in January 1974. I was very excited and close to tears. He gave us a sitting and I was so excited during the sitting that I found it hard to centre on my heart. Master simply said afterward that He was getting rid of grossness. I did a lot of crying on that visit. Babuji told me that frustration had been removed and words were inadequate to express my gratitude. Babuji had told Don that he had put him at the seventh knot. So I thought I would ask Babuji where I was. I thought that I should at least be near to where Don was. He said I was at the first knot. I went to my room and cried. I had been praying to progress faster and felt that I had. It came as a shock that I had not. Babuji told Don that He usually kept people at the first knot for a year. My year was almost up so I prayed that I would begin my journey through the knots.

I attended my first Basant Panchami at Babuji's house where there were about one thousand abhyasis as the building of the ashram went on. There were pits in the ground for cooking near the Westerners' quarters. The roof of the ashram was completely poured in three days. There were

two mixers mixing sand, stone and pieces of crushed brick which they carried and dumped into the machine. Then the cement was shuffled into small pans which were handed from man to man up to the top of the building and sent back empty. It was amazing that it was finished so fast.

After Basant, we went to Madras to visit Parthasarathi and his family. Babuji was to come later, but we heard that he had become ill and had been taken to the hospital. Parthasarathi went to Shahjahanpur to see Babuji and we offered our help nursing Babuji if it was necessary. After Babuji was discharged from the hospital Parthasarathi sent us a telegram asking us to return to Shahjahanpur immediately. So we cancelled our flights to Canada. When we arrived Babuji was feeling better but weak. We moved him to the guesthouse in a room on the ground floor. Don slept with him and I stayed in the room across the hall, the one with the picture of Lalaji. The ashram was closed to visitors during this time so that Babuji could recuperate with only his family and us there.

We could feel Babuji working on us as we cared for him. One night he said that He had effected some inner changes which we would feel when they came to our external awareness. We had both been feeling some lightness. My mental attitude was changing, being so near Him. I felt that nothing mattered except Master. My love for Him was doubling up. He said that I was improving every day. Babuji was growing physically stronger day by day too, except for some weakness which he felt in the mornings.

Babuji told me that he had touched my heart just a little. I felt slight vibrations throughout my body. The next day he told me that he had started my journey of the heart, but very slowly to prepare me for being a preceptor. I asked about the vibrations that I had been feeling. He said they were due to being with Him so much. I felt that Master had become my beloved and I the lover and my devotion for him increased each day as if it had no bounds. One day I became ill with a fever of 104. Don was worried about me. Master said a prayer for me and when my temperature went up He "exercised himself", as he said, to help me because he loved me. Needless to say my temperature came down and I got slowly better.

On March 27, 1974 Babuji granted me permission to do the work of the Mission. He said that it was my reward for service to Him. After the

sitting I developed a feeling of intoxication which gradually doubled up until I felt very intoxicated or "divinely stoned." During this time Babuji made a certificate naming Parthasarathi as His spiritual representative. He dictated a letter to Don in which he wrote to Parthasarathi informing him of this.

Babuji finally recovered completely and it was time for us to leave. Babuji gave me Rs.30 and said it was a custom to give your sister a present upon parting. I was close to tears and gave him a hug as I knew that he was not going to give me one. He gave Don a big hug before we left for the train station. He always made us leave early to the station because dacoits could be on the road late at night. He gave Don and me so much that I can never comprehend all He gave.

In October 1975, Christine and I went to see Babuji. I took over giving Master his medication as his granddaughter Nini was studying for exams. His health was not too bad but he looked tired and had some weakness. He was taking medication three times a day for his stomach and one for his ears. Also, he was having back trouble and was on medication whenever he felt pain. Don had told me to get Babuji to eat more and to take more rest. I did my best but was not able to be as strict as Don with Babuji.

Babuji sometimes told you what work He was doing on you. One such instance was when Christine and I were there. He told us what point we were in and that He was finishing the tour of the point and then moving us. He told us at five thirty PM that in one hour's time the work would be completed. The next day he told us that He had taken us to the next point. I do not know why he told us. I had to be attentive that my ego did not become inflated, and remember that none of it was my achievement, only Master's benevolent grace in giving us these conditions. One day Babuji was having stomach pain, so he told Teresa, Christine and me to sit in front of Lalaji's bed and Lalaji would give us the sitting. Master had a bed for Lalaji in one corner and he, Babuji, was lying on his cot behind us. He told us to start and to stop. The sitting lasted about fifteen minutes. Babuji asked us what we had felt. I felt subtle energy; there was a distinct difference between the transmission from Lalaji and Babuji. He told us that our conditions were stationary but that was good.

In 1976 we were with Babuji in Madras at his son's house when He gave a sitting to a small group for two minutes. He told us He gave us spiritual benefit worth seven years. Babuji talked about cleaning and said that forty per cent of the abhyasis do the cleaning wrong. He said that they think they are gross and therefore they create grossness in themselves. We should have the idea that if there is any grossness and impurities they are going out.

Nothing was hidden from Babuji's gaze. When he looked at us, he could see everything. He looked at the divinity in us and cleaned away all the grossness that was covering this divinity so that it could expand and shine forth from us. We sometimes judge ourselves harshly, but I never felt that Babuji judged us.

In 1978 Don and I took some movies of Babuji. Don asked the questions while I put film in the camera every fifteen minutes or so.

Don: How would you describe Lalaji?

Babuji: The greatest saint throughout the world, the only saint throughout the world as my experience goes.

Don: What has He given you?

Babuji: That which nobody has given except Him.

Don: What are you giving to the world now?

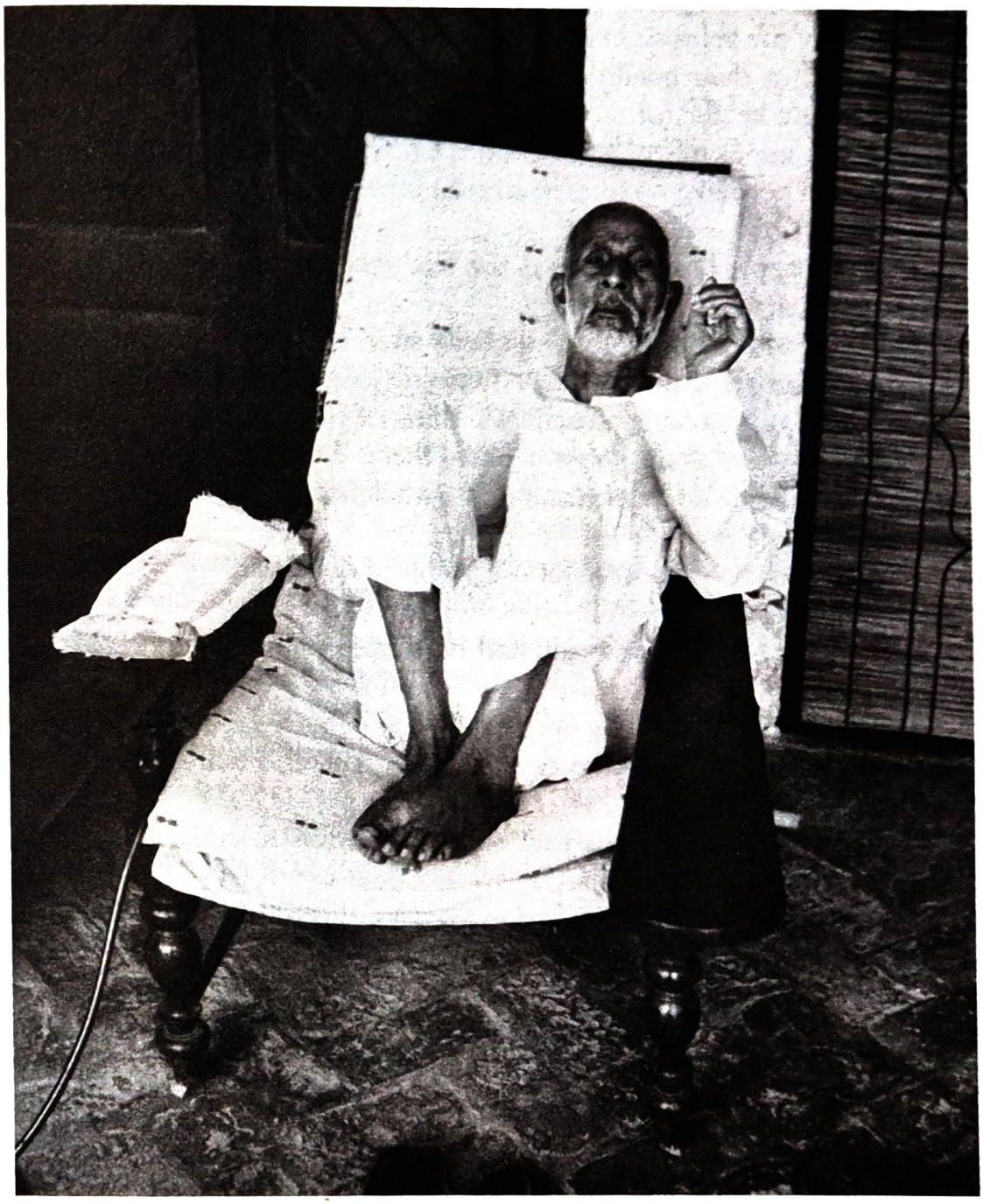
Babuji: Love.

Don: What would you say is the duty of an abhyasi in Sahaj Marg?

Babuji: Obedience, faithful to the Mission, surrender, all these things. Surrender of course is very difficult as the people say but it is totally, what you call, good. Only an idea that we are dependent on God. This gives surrender. It is a sort of feeling and not the idea, feeling and very soon within a few months or within a few minutes a man can succeed in that. Very easy things they are, but who will follow?

"Before this world was born," Babuji said, "there was a balanced state and there was no creation at that time. When balance was disturbed we came into being. So if we go to that extent we will die. It is impossible, nobody can do it even."

Don: But we can long for that condition.



Babuji: But it is not a good condition.
Don: Some of the abhyasis in Canada feel they are not progressing. I see an improvement in their conditions but they do not feel it? Do you know what this might be due to?
Babuji: Well, minds differ. Some grasp this thing very early, some after so many years. They have no interest in it in other words, interest should be there.
Don: Some people have expressed the fear that only the preceptors get higher approach in this Mission.
Babuji: Approach comes first and it follows after. You follow? There should be approach first and it happens. Afterwards comes the real thing. It is essential to have a good approach. We think of the 'I' too much. But we should think—it is there, let it remain there. But they give power to it....There should be no friction among us, wholeheartedly we should work. All as one.
Don: Do you have any message for the people in the West?
Babuji: Only blessings.

Babuji's hookah was ready and he started puffing on it. Then he said, "It has started talking to me."
Don: I would like to know that language.
Babuji: Rise and fall. Hubble rise, bubble fall. Rise and fall. Coming and going.
Don: Do you feel Babuji, it is necessary for abhyasis to come to you for spiritual development?
Babuji: Those who are in me, they don't require this thing, unless they are within me, they require everything.

We should ponder over this answer and ask ourselves—are we truly in Him?

"Who is Thinking That Thought?"

ROSALIND PEARMAIN, LONDON, U.K

Like some others in the Mission, I sometimes feel that my meeting and contact with Babuji were of a nature that facilitated my transition to our living Master, Chariji. Somehow from the beginning, there was always more of an inner than an outer connection. I did not meet Babuji in person for three and a half years after I had begun the practice although I had a strong sense of Him in an inner way. I have subsequently discovered from my journal that he appeared in a dream a year before I began Sahaj Marg. In the dream, an old small man with a white beard appeared before me took me to a room in a house and talked at great length and depth about the stages of spiritual development. He explained that this was a movement from colours of gold, to silver, to blue and grey and this surprised me because I would have thought it was the opposite. I awoke from the dream knowing it had immense meaning but remembering very little.

I began the practice in the autumn of 1976 and heard so much about Babuji from K.V. Reddy and Bairbre, that I felt a clear sense of Him within that came into meditation. But it was only in April 1980, that I travelled to Denmark with my daughter of 4 months to meet Babuji in person for the first time. He was not too well, and seemed far away. I have to confess a slight disappointment from feeling I did not have any personal contact as I had heard in the stories but I was very moved by his fragile, simple and extraordinary presence. In fact, I felt utterly unworthy to go near him at all in any way.

In the following year, I felt a stronger yearning to see him, this time in Malaysia. This time, I felt the need to connect in my heart with him. Again my daughter accompanied me, now 14 months, and I encountered the challenge of cultural and climatic shock so that on arrival I felt

stripped of all skin and utterly vulnerable like a cell without a membrane. Perhaps this is the only way to meet Master. On this visit I discovered Babuji outwardly in the way others had described—especially his love for talking. He was well and in good spirits. Some people said that he had not been in this form for a very long time. He was affectionate with Erica and I have a picture in my mind of him moving with some haste to catch up with her toddling steps to give her some fruit. Unfortunately, she was a shy child and did not easily respond. He said, "She is scared of my beard."

Each day for several days, the Westerners, about twenty of us, were invited to spend time with Babuji in K.V. Reddy's house. As we approached the house in Petaling Jaya there was a sacred atmosphere pervading the neighbouring area. Every precious morning, Babuji would talk and explain extraordinary things about the nature of the universe and creation. One day he said, "These things have never been revealed before!" and he gave a title for the book for this trip "Secret Revealed" (this was never written). I remember that there was also immense hilarity and laughter, and Babuji was pleased about this. He said, "See what a spirit of brotherhood I have created when we can all laugh together like this," and we laughed with the joy of his joy in our joy. After that, I remember simply drowning in love for him, absolutely dissolving. At that precise moment, he called me to give me a sitting. It seemed a long time and I felt sorry to cause Him so much work. But he just said very kindly, "Do you feel lighter now?"

It finally became possible to travel to Shahjahanpur to see Babuji the following year in April 1982. In fact, this would have been the last possible time to see him there. Once the decision had been made, I felt as though a six-lane motorway had been opened up between London and India—such was the sense of attraction and movement there. Going into his courtyard was a very peaceful and homely experience. The most powerful meeting I had was in an inner way. In the next afternoon, I began to encounter my self in such a way that I felt enormous pain for the betrayal of the self within. It was an encounter with the small self with the utterly compassionate gaze of the larger Self—nothing was hidden. But I felt the absolute love of Babuji no matter what shame or pain and it has been a core sustaining moment in my life.

Mentioning this extraordinary condition to Babuji the next day, he said simply that we should never seek to have the same condition or experience twice—we should not hold onto things that have passed. I was also concerned about doing my practice while my daughter would wish to interrupt or climb all over me. He answered that it was very hard, but that I should continue with my practice, and after that she did not cause any further interruption—perhaps because Babuji had given me more confidence in doing what was appropriate.

He was utterly polite and considerate. Once I was sitting in his room and he got up to leave, and as I held the hanging beads back for him as anyone would, he thanked me with such tender humility. I was able to spend the last evening before I left sitting out with him in the courtyard. It was a very blissful time. Rather foolishly I thought to myself, "I must think of God." Babuji suddenly said, "Who is thinking that thought?" He also said that will must work on nature and he made a crossed gesture with his hands. He also said that it was possible to achieve Realisation in seven months as Lalaji had done. Both remarks were deeply resonant to what was needed in my character. He went to bed before the time for my train, but as I left, he got up again and came to the gate to say goodbye and whenever I think of Him standing there I feel overwhelmingly touched. In the meeting in Paris in September later that year, there was a strong feeling that we were being prepared for his physical absence. The work in that seminar was extraordinary. And in the time in Shahjahanpur in the spring, Babuji had already been very preoccupied with the preparation for that seminar, as if he were already there.

Babuji continues to be present in a myriad ways; in dreams, and in meditation when he has simply approached and has given some instruction; he is present in infinite subtle ways we find in meditation and within Chariji and within us. He is an eternal presence. Whatever we can speak of Him is only a tiny glimpse of the Real personality. How could we ever begin to touch that in any words?

Now it feels important not to hold onto these moments in the past but to live forward what He worked so hard to create in us and in humanity and in the task he has passed to Chariji. May we all honour his endeavour to the best of our capacities!

"Who Really Sees Me?"

TERESA VALENTINE, GEORGIA, USA

I was at Babuji's home. All other Western abhyasis had left and I was to go home the next day. You could tell by the activity in the household that something was being prepared for that evening. Five chairs were set out in the courtyard. Four were set, two facing two and a fifth one was facing down the middle of them, as if at the head of a table. Master sat in that chair. There was an air of expectation about him, as he awaited a visitor who seemed to be a person of some stature in the community. Eventually, that person arrived with three others, thus filling the four chairs. It was beautiful to see the respect Babuji showed his guests, from the setting up the chairs, to his waiting personally for them, to the simple elegance in their meeting and sitting together in that formation, and Master's quiet attention to them.

During the time before they arrived, as Master sat waiting, I went over and sat in one of the opposing chairs and watched him while he remained seemingly absorbed in thought. The peace that evening was beyond description. Two things grew in my heart as I watched him there. For the first time my heart wanted to reach out to all humanity; it wanted to cry out in astonishment, "Where are you? He is here! He is sitting by Himself, alone in a quiet courtyard, in a chair, in the twilight, silent, in this place in India. By Himself! Where **are** you? What could you possibly be doing that you are not here! How could I be the only other person in this courtyard?"

I have often, since then, thought of that heart's cry. I think of others now sitting next to Master maybe only two or three of them, when the rest have gone home or are, perhaps, sleeping and I think of them wondering, as I go about my life here in America, "Where **is** everyone!"

Something else that grew in my heart as I watched Babuji that evening while the light faded, and a few electric lamps were turned on, was longing and wonder. I gazed at him and longed for my vision to clear. I knew that though I was looking at him, I did not see Him. I did not know who He really was. I knew there was something beyond anything I could imagine sitting there, yet I just could not see it. All I could feel was that I could see him but could not behold Him.

When people say, "You are fortunate that you met Babuji," I often want to say, "Have I really met Him any more than you have?" Yes, I am fortunate. I am blessed with a Master who regardless of my limited capacity to really meet Him, can still shower His Love on me, can still transform my being from within, and then wait, tend, nurture, guide Masterfully while I go about, oh so slowly, learning to allow the heart to open, the true vision to clear. While we stumble through our dramas, our fascinations, staring stupidly at Whom we know not, still He pulls us steadily up in spite of ourselves, till through no fault of our own, save for an unbroken longing half buried deep inside of us, we can indeed meet Him.

This is the Master and the great good fortune that we all have.

"I Do Not Shine With Clothes"

OM PRAKASH SAXENA, SHAHJAHANPUR, U.P., INDIA

In 1953, when I saw Babuji Maharaj for the first time I felt as if I had a very old relationship with Him and since I came to know that Babuji thought every one to be His own this feeling has been rooted in me. I felt that every matured thought was open to be read by Him because he used to wash away the impressions of thought. I felt this happening in my own case. Once I came from my office thinking that if Babuji Maharaj visited my home I would offer him a cup of milk. Later, I was surprised when Babuji came to my home with Bro. Ishwar Sahai and asked if he might take a cup of milk, if possible, and tea for Ishwar Sahai. I served the same and He invited me to come to His residence.

After Basant the next year in Shahjahanpur, I was ready to come back home when Babuji asked me to deliver some money to the person who had arranged the *bhandara* in honour of Lalaji Maharaj. As I started to walk, my *chappal* was torn. Seeing this, Babuji offered me his wooden sandals saying that he had used these during his abhyas period and in the rainy season it was better to use wooden sandals to save one's feet from the insects. In the moment when I put on the sandals I had the idea that all those who were present at the *bhandara* would be liberated by virtue of these wooden sandals. But Babuji said, "Don't go there," because the money could be delivered the next day. "Now these wooden sandals are yours," Babuji said. Eventually, I handed these sandals over to Chariji for preservation at Manapakkam Ashram.

Once I was sitting with a group of abhyasis at Sitapur when Babuji was talking. He expressed the need to bathe. Hearing this I got up and filled the bucket with water for his bath. He went to take his bath and upon returning said, "Sarvesh has filled the warm water for my bath."

Hearing this I felt that I had not love for Babuji, otherwise I would have taken care about the temperature of the water.

Another time, I was offered food from the same plate as Babuji Maharaj was taking breakfast. I felt proud to be the lucky person who got a chance to share breakfast with Babuji. After a few minutes Babuji said, "There is condition when we can eat with the dogs, but this does not mean that we should gather the dogs and eat with them." These words washed away the pride in me. Babuji Maharaj explained about *Dawat-e-shiraz*, a sort of feast in which the host serves the guest with full love, but his kitchen budget is not exceeded.

Once a gentleman came to Babuji on the festival of Holi. Babuji jokingly said, "We are *kayasth*, hence today being a festival I will offer you drink." (wine or liquor). The gentleman said, "But I do not drink," Babuji gave him a glass of water, and as he walked away his legs were tottering. Next year again the same gentleman came and said to Babuji, "I have come to have the same drink which you gave me last year on Holi." At this Babuji just smiled, but the man did not start abhyas.

Babuji Maharaj was very economical by nature and used to say, "If old things are usable then no money should be wasted on purchasing new things." Once his grandson told him, "These new clothes will shine on you." Babuji replied, "I do not shine with clothes, but clothes are shined with me."

He disliked wastage of any type, whether water, food, time or powers. But Babuji Maharaj never cared for saving money if it meant getting work done in time and he never cared about being hungry, but He was very careful about the hunger of others. He used to say, "I eat to live and not live to eat."

Babuji liked material jobs to be completed by material rather than spiritual means. There was an instant when Shri C.A. Rajagopalachariji was staying in Shahjahanpur and felt ill due to a head injury when he fell in the bathroom. Doctors were called, check-ups were done and he was given an injection to which he had a bad reaction. He started shivering. The doctor's assistant was not there and no medicine was available. Babuji seemed worried. An abhyasi went to try to purchase a tablet to remove the reaction of the injection, but did not return in time. When he got back he

found that Babuji had removed the effect of the injection by a simple stroke of will.

Babuji used to say that laziness and recreation were poison in spiritual pursuit. He also said that every job was to be done very carefully.

Babuji respected the feelings of all and could express his views to any person. He knew all the qualities of persons who came to Him in worldly and spiritual pursuits. He used to repeat the words of Lalaji Maharaj: "Character is the spirit of spirituality." Another time, Babuji Maharaj told me that, "Guru is unregistered document of God." And in my presence Babuji told a devoted abhyasi, "If you love the children of others then the children will not become shareholders in your worldly property."

Babuji was capable of changing the character of persons who loved him and used to say that the word 'impossible' was not in his dictionary, but Lalaji's consent was required. He was an example of love to family, nation, world and the universe. He sowed the seed of love in the heart of whoever came to Him.

Rev. Babuji Maharaj was the perfect son, father, disciple, citizen, lover, beloved, guru and Master during his physical life. He was confident that His Mission would be fully successful. Now he is everywhere as Divine to those who love Him with faith and obedience. Aspirants are invited to reap benefit from His worthy representative.

"Look, I Am Telling"

WILLIAM WAYCOTT, CALIFORNIA, USA

I was very fortunate to be one of those who had the opportunity of visiting Babuji Maharaj in Shahjahanpur during his lifetime. The visit in question occurred during the first week of October, 1981, when few visitors were in the ashram. I found myself sitting alone with Babuji in the mornings on the veranda of his house, where we would sit for a few hours at a stretch. Those hours were precious ones. For me, it was ecstasy.

During the moments when Babuji was not in his familiar chair on the veranda, I would wait for him, pondering what he was and how he had made such an impact upon me. During that visit, I found myself immersed in a special state of purity and bliss, a timeless moment previously unknown. In it, I could understand how there were states of being more profound than daily existence, and from the experience, I could understand that such a perfect state was only possible through the guidance of a master of calibre such as Babuji.

While waiting for him to return to the veranda, I distinctly remember staring down at the highly polished paving stones which made up the floor of Babuji's veranda. I marvelled at the fortune of these simple stones so perfectly shining beneath the feet of the Master as he walked to and fro. In my simplistic way, these smooth slates were somehow more fortunate than I to be placed so close to him. They somehow had the distinct pleasure of caressing his feet day in and day out. I felt envious of those stones, indeed!

At the same time, I remember watching the ever-present sparrows flying about Babuji's house, often landing right in front of him. Again, I found myself thinking if only the birds knew how very special they were, to be in the intoxicating atmosphere of Babuji's home and fly in the air which

Babuji breathed. I wondered if the resonance of Babuji's divine presence there, so strongly present to me, might surely draw the sparrows from great distance to bathe in his presence, as I had done? If such a pursuit of this miraculous man was possible for me, surely it could also be true for the ubiquitous sparrows.

My thoughts then turned to the people all around, those both inside and outside the compound that made up Babuji's house. I wondered what was on their minds. Did those brothers and sisters realise what the birds already knew? Did the abhyasis know the real worth of this man? Had they come to receive the gifts which he had to offer? Did Babuji's neighbours ever sense that there was a saint present in the next house? For that matter, were the inhabitants of Shahjahanpur ever aware of the special gift Babuji had to offer to mankind right within their midst? More than likely, like myself, they were busy attending to their worldly affairs unable to detect his significance.

During one of those mornings, towards mid-day, Babuji looked up and asked me if I had eaten lunch. I immediately responded that I had not. Babuji then looked off into the distance. I knew that meals were being served at specified hours in the ashram, but instead of making my move to go for lunch, I was hoping Babuji would ask me to take food in his home, as had occurred on a previous occasion. I reasoned that if I waited on the veranda, he would have to invite me for food, so I continued sitting as the others headed back to the ashram. Time marched on and the hour grew late. Babuji looked at me again and asked the same question, if I had eaten. I again replied in the negative, hoping my gamble had been successful. At that point he stood up out of his chair and disappeared into the kitchen area of his home. Now, I was certain preparations were being made for my food. Little did I know that I was about to go without lunch that day and learn more about Babuji's subtle forms of communication. About sixty minutes later, Babuji returned from the kitchen, passed right in front of me, and then proceeded to go for his afternoon nap. By this time the meal hour had ended at the ashram and it dawned on me that I had surely outstayed my welcome on the veranda. I departed immediately.

Once back in the ashram, I discussed what had transpired with the caretaker. It was only then that I came to understand Babuji's gentle,

polite and respectful ways of reminding me to go for food. Babuji did not choose to say, "Please go for food." Instead he used his unique style to simply remind me that the meal hour had come. Had I been the abhyasi he would have wanted me to be, I would have understood him, bid him good day, and returned to the ashram directly. But, I missed the cue and was forced to learn the hard way through an embarrassment. It was a point of great reflection for me that I could not understand Babuji in the manner he had intended.

I learned that day to listen carefully to the words of the Master and dive deep into his message. His simple words are pregnant with meaning and opportunity. With practice comes awareness and with awareness comes understanding. With our best effort and his support and guidance, the goal is easily reached.

"Beings Who Think They Have No Love..."

CLAUDINE GUILLON, CROUTTES, FRANCE

Long before I knew of Babuji's existence I experienced contact with Him. I was earnestly seeking the Divine, doing meditation and yoga all alone and I used to take holidays in a place called 'Garrigues des Hauts de Frejus' *and* spend days alone, walking kilometres in the 'Garrigues', instead of going to the seaside, true joy. Once, during those walks I was overcome by an all-consuming state that I did not want to lose for anything. I had the feeling that all my being was connected, in a state of love and beauty, with all that existed above and beneath me and I wanted to kiss sky and earth. It was heart-rending and marvellous at the same time. It lasted eight days. After eighteen months in Sahaj Marg, I realised that Babuji had been with me during that holiday.

After that experience I met a friend for Christmas whom I had not met for five or six years. She told me that she had found her spiritual path, Sahaj Marg, and during my first sitting one month later I recognised the transmission that I knew from those eight days of summer. I have no doubt that it was Babuji's Love I felt.

I met Babuji one year later at Shahjahanpur when I went with this friend whom I thank so much. It was very surprising to see such a frail small person, but his body was only the case holding the invisible jewel. During that visit, I leaned against a veranda column gazing at him. Suddenly, Babuji looked me in the eyes and at that moment I felt an electric jolt from the top of the head to the bottom of my spine and back again to the top of my head. This only lasted a fraction of a second but I was completely staggered. When I got back to the ashram I had pain in my spinal column like needle points. A preceptor, who knew me from the

beginning of my abhyas, explained that Babuji had opened spiritual points in me and this was a great gift.

Three years later I was ill and could not go to Babuji as usual for Basant, so I did meditations at the same time as those in Shahjahanpur. One night I prayed to Babuji, "I am here, do not forget me," and started my meditation. It became very deep.

"Who are you?" had been my constant question. Then, during meditation, I had the sensation of going slowing and deeply into myself. Then began a dull buzz which grew and grew until I became that buzz with the feeling of being the infinitely large and the infinitely small at the same time in this great power. This was both fantastic and frightening. While in this state I tried to move one hand. I was reassured to have control of it because I could not move my body at all. So, with my hand, I touched the other hand and I felt that touched an infinitely subtle envelope waving in space. Inwardly, I called Master and received the answer, "I am that." That, was to say, the infinitely large and the infinitely small, no defined time or space. The state lasted for some time and came back fifteen days later for a moment, but without fear and I felt full confidence in Him.

Another year, when I stayed at his house in Shahjahanpur I had the sensation of emptiness, no feeling of love. I was surprised to be with him whom I desired so much to see and yet when I was far from him, this feeling sometimes consumed me and I did not understand it. I did not speak English so I planned to ask him about this through a friend. Well, Babuji had gone to search for his dentures and as he came back, walking slowly to the veranda, He said in English, "There are some beings who think they have no love when they have much love." There was no point in my friend asking the question about my "no love". I had the answer.

"Life is a State of Being"

DIANA WAYCOTT, CALIFORNIA, USA

If one really knows love, Chariji says, then one cannot speak of it. So, how to write about Babuji? It is like trying to describe all aspects of this world or universe with only a hundred words. Even if words were unlimited, it is an impossible task. Many people had much more contact with Babuji than I had. I met Him only four times in person, although many times in dreams and visions, yet the impact of his Being on me is beyond words. To do justice to Him on his one hundredth birth anniversary, I wish I could convey all He has meant to me and how my life has changed. Yet it somehow seems profane to put into limiting words what Truth and Reality He opened up to me. I will try to describe it with an analogy:

It is as though I had been walking down the sidewalk of an ordinary street lined with houses. I was minding my own business, lost in my own thoughts, when an insignificant person sitting on one of the front steps of a house softly called me. At first I just wanted to ignore, continue in my own thoughts and wander down the street. Yet the person quietly and gently persisted that he had something to show me. I took my time about acknowledging him and once I met his gaze, I still wondered if I should stop and go to him. There was nothing threatening in his presence or gesture, however like Bilbo Baggins of *The Hobbit*, I had rather not get involved, my life was fine as it was, thank you.

Why did I turn my steps to approach him? I don't know. Was it curiosity? What could there possibly have been in that ordinary house with that ordinary man on that ordinary street? And yet as I approached him, I trusted him. I soon knew that he was polite and kind and there was obvious delight in his eyes that I had come thus far and might continue the

few steps further to peer into the doorway. He was excited by the prospect, like a child who has a surprise to share. Still feeling a stranger, I came closer to the stairs. He was ahead of me up the stairs and opened the door wide, gently but earnestly he encouraged me to go up and see for myself.

As I climbed the stairs, my trust increased, but where this was leading evaded me. I did not know how much time had passed before I stepped close enough to see into the doorway. At first all was dark within as my eyes were used to the bright sunshine outside. I was still hesitant. Slowly I was able to see a whole universe beyond this doorway; it was like peering into the heavens, there was infinite space with only stars marking the distances. I was truly puzzled now. I looked at this man and my eyes questioned him as to what this was and how this could be, for it appeared that the whole world, the real world was within this house that had no barriers, no limits. The world outside this house suddenly seemed just a facade, like props on a stage. This made no sense to my mind. It was like I was in a science fiction movie; once I stepped across the threshold, I would be in infinite space. With assurance He quietly took my hand and led me through the doorway. We stepped into space and flew together.

And thus began a new life, a whole new understanding. The words might be the same, but they had new meanings, greater dimensions. I look back and wonder how I thought the world was whole before, when I was wandering aimlessly in illusion.

Above all, I am grateful to my Master who beckoned and led me to the doorway and through. I am grateful for his compassion and love which reaches out to all. For every time I have looked to Him for the answers, for the comfort, for the Love, He has given all. I know that He is with me always, now and forever.

"...Else We Would Have Asked Him Not to Do It"

DILIP JAIN, CALCUTTA, INDIA

Translations from the Hindi section of old issues of the publication, *Sahaj Marg* (Patrika).

When Babuji was asked about the role of a *sannyasi,* he said, "*Sannyasi* is like a traffic policeman. He puts on his uniform so that people may recognise him and enquire the way to go."

The ego is inflated when novices are made preceptors. One such preceptor asked the other, "Why don't you do sadhana?" He replied, "I'm a preceptor. Ram Chandraji also does not do sadhana."

Babuji once said, "I began *puja* because others will not do *puja* till I did. I said, 'Well this is fine.' After a few days, Lalaji ridiculed, 'Who asked you to do puja regularly? Gurus do not have to.' So I left."

Dr. K.C. Varadachari in a jovial mood said, "Babuji, you'll agree that I am more educated than you are?" Babuji replied, "No doubt about that." Then Dr. Varadachari said, "And, Babuji, you know I'm a Vedantist. My knowledge is superior to yours." Babuji answered, "Yes, but our sadhana begins only after the two (Vedas and knowledge) end."

A sister abhyasi said, "Babuji, my dependence on you is increasing. My mind is overcast with your thoughts. I remember you in different ways...." After some time she continued, "Your eldest son is very sick." She referred to her son like this out of modesty. Babuji replied, "If my son is sick, why do you get bothered?"

Question: "Babuji, it is written in Mahabharata that yogis live and die as they wish. How's that?" Babuji: "I know how to die but I do not tell

it to anybody, because after a quarrel on slightest pretext with wife you touch the point and you can sing, 'Okay, I'm leaving'!"

Babuji: "The Superintendent of Police asked me, 'Tell me, what is my condition?' I told him, 'You take so much time in your *puja*, it must be good.' But he was S.P., so he asked again in an authoritative voice, 'No, you tell me what is my condition?' I also spoke in a little commanding manner, 'You are in the state of ignorance.' He must have been displeased with this answer because he asked again in the same manner, 'Then what is your state?' I answered, 'One of complete ignorance.' I told the truth but he must have been bewildered thinking I was worse than him."

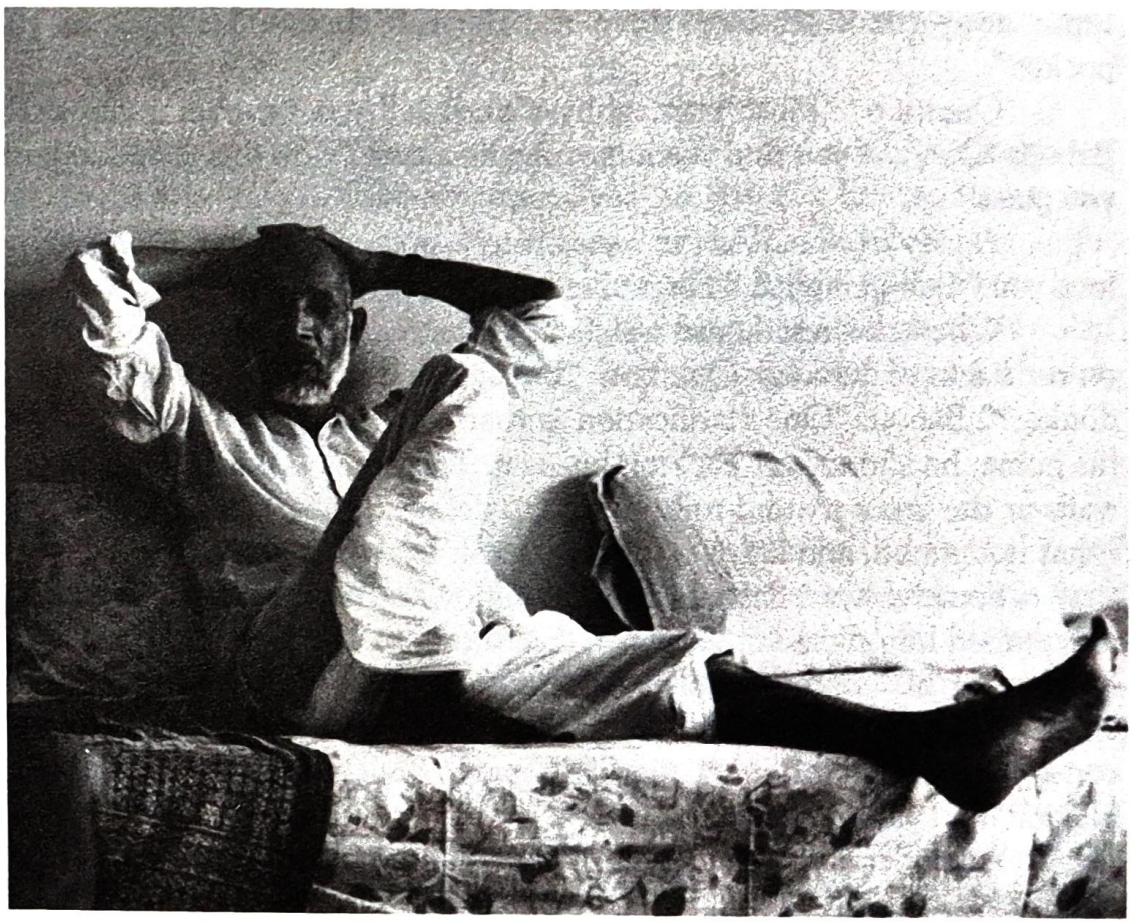
People often ask such questions, the answer to which they will not understand. Someone asked Lalaji, "Why did God indulge in Creation?" Lalaji replied, "Neither you nor I was there at that time, else we would have asked Him not to do it."

Once a few sadhus with strings of hair bound around their heads, carrying hand pitchers and with beads around their necks came to Babuji. Sarcastically, they said, "We are running around in search of God, leaving our homes, carrying only pitchers in our hands. This one has become a mahatma just by sitting home." They asked Babuji, "What is your name?" Babuji said, "Ram Chandra." "What is your caste?" Babuji replied, "Humanity." The sadhus went out of the gate and Babuji mirthfully looked, as if saying, "Watch not the growth of beard on my enlightened face. Read the matter, watch not merely the cover."

Question: "Sir, thousands of donkeys must be coming to this gate?" Babuji: "Yes brother. But I send them back, transformed into human beings."

Babuji: "I was in a meeting. People gave speeches. One person insisted that he would hear only the president's speech. I elaborated on the topic: Universal Dynamo of Action and Individual Dynamo of Inaction. I must have spoken for about twenty minutes when people started fleeing."

Babuji knew a lawyer in some town since 1946. Whenever Babuji went there the lawyer asked a lot of questions. Babuji asked him, "Why do you get so many questions in your mind?" The lawyer did not answer. Babuji: "I can tell." The lawyer: "Please do." Babuji: "Questions are plenty



because you really do nothing. I also do nothing. See, how a thief has caught a thief."

Abhyasis watched Babuji putting on a woollen coat in summer while taking an air journey from Calcutta to Lucknow. They thought that he must be unwell but he said there was nothing like that. "But Babuji, you were putting on a woollen coat in summer." "Ah," said Babuji, "how could I put away the coat since there are thirteen thousand rupees in the pocket."

Question: "Must puja, abhyas and sadhana be ever practised?" Babuji, "Don't, if you find them meaningless; and if you find it redundant, you must."

A lady from across the seas wrote a single line letter to Babuji, "I love you." Babuji replied, "Forget me not."

When the rest house was being constructed, bricks were brought on the backs of donkeys. Question: "Babuji, what is this creature known as donkey?" Babuji: "One clarification is that the donkey does not recollect his home, he cannot get back on his own. The other clarification is that it wails at the greenery and rolls merrily in desert. Seeing greenery, it thinks it has not grazed, and if dry, it rejoices that it has eaten all."

Some abhyasi described his condition to Babuji; Babuji was happy and praised him. Some other person heard this and wrote a letter to Babuji saying that his condition was similar. Babuji: "Your letter is received. It appears that you are suffering from some kind of mental disorder. Please consult a good doctor or Vaidya else come to Shahjahanpur, there is good Hakim and I will show you to him."

An elderly man came to Babuji, enquiring about the path to Realisation. Babuji advised him to meditate on Divine Light. "Only this? Mere meditation cannot help achieve God." Babuji: "I have not yet completed. Get up at two o'clock in the night and take bath with cold water. Then without getting down from stool or sitting on the floor, touch nothing and meditate." The elderly man felt satisfied and commented, "Yeah, that's it. This is the correct method." Babuji reflected, "People are ready to go eat the iron balls but they are not willing to eat a delicious pudding."

"Surrender is Automatic"

CHRISTINE PRISLAND, VANCOUVER, CANADA

Sister Jackie Sabourin and I went to Shahjahanpur for nearly a month in the days when abhyasis stayed at Babuji's house. It was my second visit since I joined the Mission in 1972. We had wonderful opportunities to just live and be with him. Deep inside I was aware how blessed we were to be in his company, and I knew that even though I could not fathom the infinity of his being, I appreciated and savoured each moment with him.

Sunday, October 12, 1975.

We arrived last night. We had reserved seats in the Ladies' compartment. There was an Indian Christian nun on the train who was very kind and charitable, Sister Lourdes. She works in a home for abandoned children in Old Delhi. She was very curious and asked us many questions about Master. She wanted to know what we could not find in the Christian church to fulfill us. The answer is so big, I didn't know what to say.

The new secretary, Jagdish, came to meet us at the train. We raced to Master's house in a cycle rickshaw, beating all the other rickshaws coming from the station.

Master said, "It makes me very happy to see you." And then he chuckled gleefully! My heart felt big. It is so wonderful to be with him again. He was doing much work on me in the night and I felt very joyful.

Master is looking sometimes very weak and ill, and other times animated and well. I can only gaze at him with awe and love. It is holiday here now—Ram Lila, the celebration of the birth date of Ram. So there are several other visitors.

Tuesday, October 14, 1975.

Master gave us a sitting. Apparently he has not been giving many sittings as they tire him out. He has not been talking very much and when he does it is usually to the Indians, but he has talked some to us also.

Friday, October 17, 1975.

Master returned from Lucknow last night and is suffering from intense back pain. He has a lot of difficulty getting out of his chair...and I have been hoping he would pass the pain on to me. Jackie has been doing that also but she says he doesn't give it up to anyone. He is always getting medication it seems. One of the preceptors from Shahjahanpur, Kashi Ram, is a naturopathic doctor who comes each night to massage Master's legs and back.

The days that Master was gone to Lucknow were very strange, the time dragged interminably. But now that he is back we have returned to our normal schedule of eating, sleeping and sitting beside him.

Thursday, October 23, 1975.

Master was talking this morning, saying that his horoscope was done by two different people and they said he would live to 104—he remarked he did not want to live that long! Master talked very long last night. "Surrender is an automatic thing. If you say 'I' surrender—'I' is there and surrender can not be."

Saturday, October 24, 1975.

Last night we attended a dinner at the Shahjahanpur branch of the Lions Club. Something that none of us wanted to do, but Master wanted us to go and so we did. Someone wrote up a four page speech for Birthe, and all of us, Birthe, Anne, Jytte, Jackie and I were pinned into saris by Master's grand-daughters. They came to pick us up in a small jeep and it was another memorable journey at high speed through the dark streets of Shahjahanpur. I felt Master very much there from the time we arrived. It was very strong and I felt quite happy. After Birthe's talk we had food and spoke with some of the people and left at about eleven o'clock. Master and

many others were still up and it was like a home-coming—very joyful and almost as if we had been gone for years rather than hours.

Monday, October 27, 1975.

Master was talking very much last night in a funny mood. He comes wide awake around ten o'clock. He talked about God and how people use Him; saying it is God's will and all that. Then he got up and went to lock the door into the meditation room and got his fingers stuck. The pain was pretty bad I think. He turned to us and said, "You see, here I was talking about God, and still I get hurt!"

Thursday, October 30, 1975.

Last night, Master told of his son who had died at age eight or nine and was reborn in this area. He remembered this home and when he was four or five he was brought here and pointed out his room and other things. Master was away at the time. He is now an abhyasi. Master said, "See how great Lalaji is? He gives me proof that there is transmigration." Master talks much of his simplicity—how people expect to see someone very learned and complex and he is so simple.

Friday, October 31 to Sunday, November 2, 1975.

It was an awful broken feeling yesterday, having my whole world fall down around me, but I am still here and so is Master. May God give me the patience and strength to just let things happen as they will in their own time. My emotional condition today is still quite weak, but I feel little by little that Master is repairing the hurt, filling it with Himself.

Tuesday, November 4, 1975.

Master just told Jackie and me that he is moving us both to the cosmic region. He said that he is able to do more work on us when we are here than at home. He said that when we are at home he can do four work on us, but six when we are here. Yesterday was the beginning of Diwali and we went into the inner courtyard and watched the family's celebrations. There were lots of firecrackers and noise. The houses looked so beautiful in the dark with the candles outlining the windows and roofs.

Many people came to visit Master, bringing their children all dressed up. They brought sweets which Master blessed (prasad). Lots and lots of sweets.

When Ramaji was here he asked if I had my Patrika life subscription worked out. I told him that I was short of money, I would just renew it every year. Then Master said, "If you are short of money, I can give you some." Such a love for him came up in me.

Wednesday, November 5, 1975.

Last night Jackie asked Master what point we were at and when he was going to move us to the cosmic region. He said that we are in the water point and he is thinking of moving us before we leave. We aren't getting the experience of the air, water, fire points and so he is going to leave us at *trikuti* for a while. He told us to keep a diary of our spiritual experiences and that we should write him in six months telling him of our condition.

Saturday, November 8, 1975.

This morning Master said that he had moved Jackie and me up a point and he said that when he was at that point he felt darkness inside in spite of the light of the sun. He said that I had started feeling the change. After he talked to us I felt a sense of confusion and then was very breathless for a few minutes. Everything feels very steady though, even my love for Master. There are no fluctuations or ups and downs—it is all just as it is.

Monday, November 10, 1975–Delhi.

Yesterday was our last day at Master's home. Prakash got us some sweets for *prasad.* Master placed a chair in front of Lalaji's bed and we placed the sweets on the bed. Meditation with Master for about ten minutes was indescribable. I asked Master what *prasad* meant and he said, "It is offering to Thee, O Lord, that which is Thine."

"Cleaning is Necessary for All"

B.R.V. SARAYKAR, NAGPUR, INDIA

I first saw Babuji at Ahmedabad during his 80th birthday celebrations when I wept before him after satsangh and later felt ashamed of myself. I did not know why I wept. I had often wept while reading *Voice Real.* At that time I was not aware of what spiritual progress was, and what was expected of an abhyasi. I was engrossed in my worldly problems, and wanted to get rid of many undesirable tendencies, so I was searching for relief from these things.

The next occasion on which I saw Babuji was in 1980 during Basant celebrations at Shahjahanpur. It was terribly cold and I was not used to it. I coughed continuously for forty hours without food, meditation or sleep. Coincidentally the cough started half an hour after we came out of Babuji's room. Babuji had only a glance at us for a few seconds, but when the severe cough started I thought that Babuji must have done drastic cleaning of my system.

On the day of leaving Shahjahanpur, I was sitting in a bus about to leave for the railway station. As I was sitting near a window, I saw Chariji taking a round of the ashram before he approached the bus. As he reached my window, I put my hands out to shake hands with him saying, "See you again, Sir." He took my hands in his and said, "Namaste." The touch was so soft and gentle that after eighteen years I still remember it. The most surprising thing for me was that as soon as the bus moved out of the ashram grounds onto the road to the station, the cough stopped.

The third time I saw Babuji was when I went to Shahjahanpur in September 1980 along with two abhyasis of Nagpur Centre. There were nearly fifty abhyasis at the ashram and I thought this time I will have a chance to talk to Babuji personally. But in the three days that we stayed

there, Babuji came to the ashram only twice, conducted satsangh only once and left hurriedly. I wanted to tell him that I wanted to do work as a preceptor, but I could not even get near his car. Eventually in 1987 Chariji gave permission for me to work.

In 1981 again, I went to attend Basant celebrations at Shahjahanpur and in 1982, I wanted to attend Babuji's birthday celebrations at Surat. But that year, college teachers went on strike during the examination period and hence university teachers were compulsorily given the job of conducting examinations at different centres under Nagpur University. I was sent to a college at Chandrapur 150 kilometres away to the south of Nagpur. The duty was for almost a month, April 16 to May 15,1982. So I was certain that I was not going to attend celebrations at Surat. My wife and two year old son were alone at Nagpur and I was also worried about them. One evening at Chandrapur when I was doing my cleaning and had worrying thoughts about the security of my family, I saw Babuji Maharaj seated on an easy chair in the front room of the house where we stayed. Immediately I stopped worrying.

Encouraged by this vision, I started praying to Babuji to enable me to attend his birthday celebrations. After a couple of days, I told the principal at the college where I worked that I wanted to go to Surat for important personal work around April 27. He also wanted to go to Mumbai for some work around April 25th. As the total number of students appearing for examinations in that college was very small, he phoned the university authorities in Nagpur to shift the centre of examination from that college to another local college. Somehow the university authorities agreed to do it. Thus I reached Nagpur on April 25th. This seemed a miracle to me.

Thus I attended Babuji's 82nd birthday celebrations at Surat not knowing that this would be the last time that I would see him. Babuji looked weak and ill. But senior abhyasis said that he would be amongst us until 2005.

When he was admitted to AIIMS at Delhi, I had a strong desire to go to Delhi and meet him, but I was financially hard pressed, and in any case, thought myself too junior to get entry to his room. We were praying for his health. Once he appeared in my dream in a white dhoti and shirt

saying that he was all right. But finally, we got the news that He had left his body.

It took a year and a half to get settled again in the spiritual practice, but after I met Rev. Chariji at his residence in Madras in November 1984 and had a sitting with him, all my doubts vanished. Again I was on the path to continue my spiritual journey. After I became a preceptor in May 1987, both Babuji and Chariji used to come into my dreams. This happened especially when I was worried. Until 1994-95 Babuji used to appear in my dreams, though not so frequently, but after that only Chariji appeared.

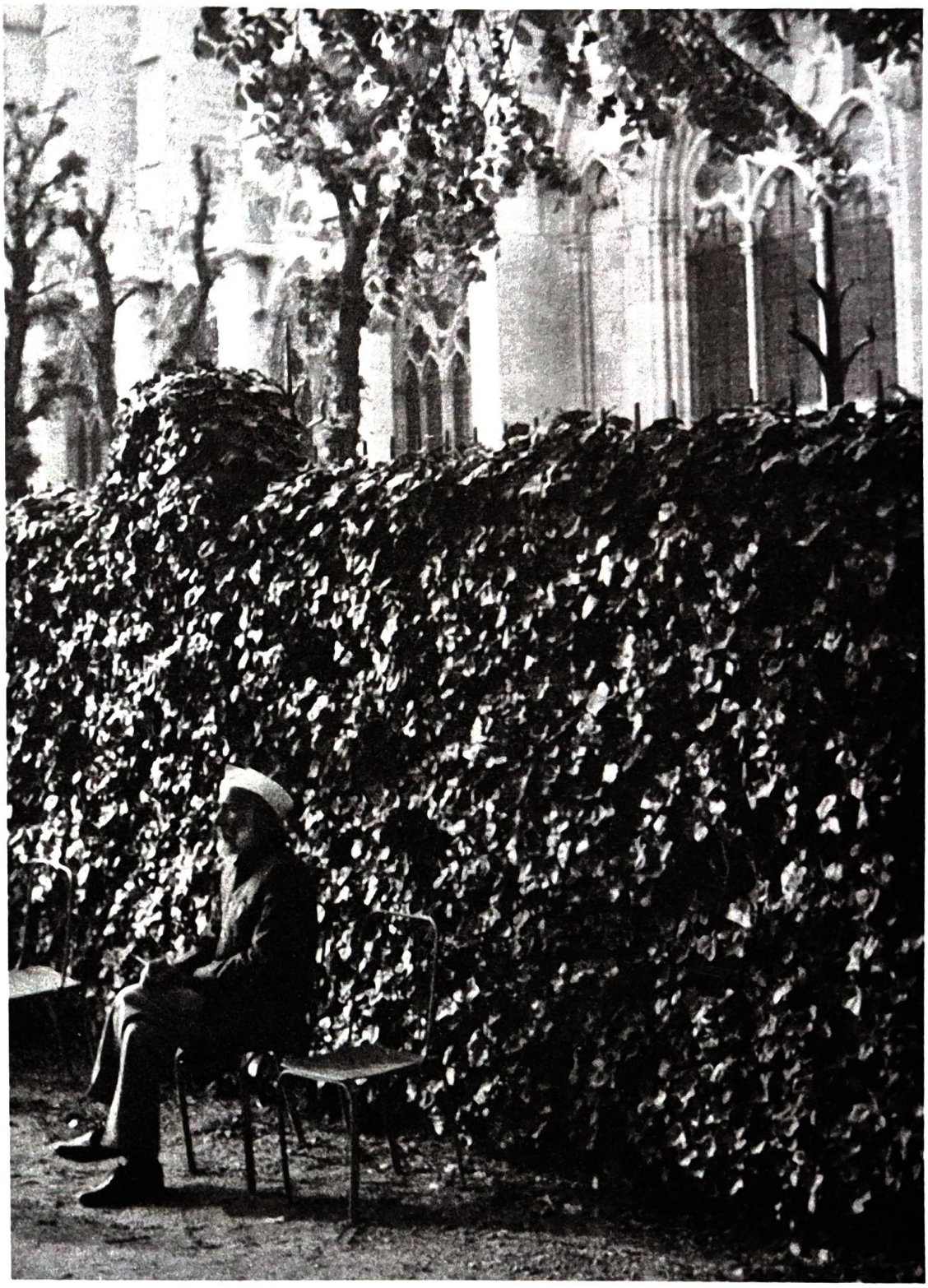
"Where are the Others?"

KRISHNA SAI, FLORIDA, USA

I started Sahaj Marg only in 1991, but like many others, Babuji Maharaj has blessed me with many darshans in my meditations and dreams.

One of the problems I had to face as a preceptor was pain when an abhyasi discontinued the practice without even trying it sincerely. Although I understood mentally that they had to come sometime, and that He could wait for eternity, a real perception of this came to me in a dream: Some of us were leaving for a celebration somewhere in India. We were with Babuji at a train station. The train was about to depart when Babuji realised that some of those expected were not there. He asked, "Where are the others?" One of us replied, "They are not yet here, Babuji. Looks like they are going to miss the train."

Babuji just smiled and we boarded the train. Sure enough, the train left without the others. Inside, I felt very sorry for them to have missed such a golden opportunity. But strangely enough, the train stopped at a place where this would have been physically impossible, and the others boarded the train. Babuji greeted them, saying, "Welcome. I have been waiting for you." As if this were not strange enough, we resumed our journey as if from where we had originally boarded. I looked at my watch, and not a single minute had passed.



"I Am Always With You"

MARIE BROUARD, FLORIDA, USA

I used to see my preceptor every Saturday morning at eight o'clock to have a sitting and go back on Sunday for group satsangh even though I lived eighty miles away. For me the more important thing was the practice and the sittings. I didn't really understand the need for being close to Master. I even started to find my preceptor a little annoying talking about Master or asking me to go to Zurich to meet Master. One Saturday morning in March 94, the year I joined Sahaj Marg, I went as usual to have an individual sitting but I was worrying about how to answer my preceptor if he asked me again about Master. And then suddenly an idea came to my mind to ask him if I went to Zurich would Master give me an individual sitting?

This question stayed deep in my mind and during the sitting I suddenly saw Babuji sitting in front of me, his chest full of light, projecting a beam of light into my chest. At the end I saw him hugging me and I even felt his arms on my shoulders and I knew the sitting was over and then my preceptor said, "That's all." I reported this experience to my preceptor who told me that He was the one who gave the sitting. This day my preceptor didn't talk about my visiting Master.

While living in California in the summer of 1994, I used to go gambling in Las Vegas during holidays, but when I started spirituality, I found that it was not easy to meditate in such a place. So I took this as a challenge and told myself that if I am in Las Vegas my meditation should be better.

For more than five years I was wondering about the meaning of unconditional love. How can we have or practice it in our lives? I got to the point where I thought I had lost the meaning of love itself. One

morning I sat in meditation and this question was so strong in my mind that I couldn't even meditate. I got lost in this thought and I found myself in front of Babuji and He started to give me the explanation. He had something looking like a kaleidoscope with different shapes and colours which interrelated between themselves. He explained to me that this interrelation between all things in the universe is what is called unconditional love. He told me that we depend on one another, we are sustained by one another. He said that this state of being, giving and receiving without being aware of it was what we can call unconditional love. It was given to us naturally, we need not look for it or ask for it. This explanation went deep in my being and I never asked this question again.

In March 1995 I dreamt of Babuji explaining to me the meaning of different layers around our hearts and how important it was for us to get rid of them. During this dream I clearly saw these layers wrapping the heart in the form of a cocoon. They were transparent one on top of the other so that I could not see where they ended. During this dream Babuji told me that we should get rid of their volume so that we become light. When I woke up I found some heaviness on my heart and this lasted for more than one hour.

In April 1995 I was at Molena Ashram for the celebration of Babuji's birthday. The sitting was deep and profound and I was completely gone. During this sitting I saw Babuji telling me that He was coming to visit me in Florida. He was sitting in two different cars at the same time, in California with Br. William Waycott and another with Br. Krishna Sai. I was wondering why He was taking two cars, He was so old, it would be better for Him to go with Bro. Krishna. But Babuji insisted and I was wondering how He would do that. At that moment the preceptor said, "That's all."

When I was back home, I received a phone call from Br. William Waycott telling me that he was coming to visit us in Miami. The same day I talked to my preceptor Krishna Sai and he told me that would he coming too. So I understood what I saw in my meditation meant that He was in each one of them and I had tears in my eyes, asking myself who I was that Babuji would come in my house? I became concerned about how I was going to take care of Him. But thanks to Him everything worked well and we had a wonderful gathering in Miami on May 13 and 14, 1995.

"I Am Waiting for You"

CARLA GIANSOLDATI, FLORENCE, ITALY

I had been in Sahaj Marg for a few months in 1990 when I dreamt that I was standing at night by the railway, just waiting. Someone came to whisper in my ear that a very important train was about to leave. I found myself running very fast to catch it. I was feeling very worried, because I remembered that I had never been able to catch a train in my dreams, since I would always have problems with my cumbersome luggage. This time, however, I felt only a little knapsack bumping against my shoulders. Running with all my strength, I saw Babuji laughing affectionately and encouraging me. He was saying, "Come on, come on! You can do it! I am waiting for you!" Finally, I caught the train. Immediately the door closed behind me and the train moved off. I felt astonished to have been able to get on, because for me it was the most important train. I also saw that in the driver's cab were Babuji, Chariji and Lalaji. As the train was leaving, dawn was beginning.

The next dream was particularly important for me because I had the feeling that it was not just a dream but a deeper experience. I revealed it only to Master: Like a mole, I was finally coming out of a dark hole in the ground, just at Babuji's feet. I was dressed in a white tunic. Babuji, too, was dressed in white. I looked up at him. He was looking far away ahead of him. He knew I had arrived, but he didn't move or look at me. We were on a deserted planet. There was a diffused light. Nothing was visible to me. It was just a desert. The ground was the same colour as the sky—the same dull white. The dream ended while I was rising up beside Babuji.

"Simply You Try to Merge in Master"

POONAN SINGH, U.P., INDIA

One experience of Babuji Maharaj completely changed my life and my way of thinking. On April 20, 1988 something happened which I could not understand. My Chariji was ill, and I just felt like crying. On the day I got this news I decided to protect him from all the sadness and ills of this world, and the easiest way to do this I felt was by praying.

Before this I had tried many prayers to no avail so I tried the five-minute prayer indicated by Babu Ram Singh every morning and evening. After that, I started a five-minute prayer for my Master, Chariji, praying that God would do me the favour of transferring all my Master's physical ills to me.

During these prayers, I would always start crying. I didn't know why I cried. I never thought about the outcome of my praying. I definitely knew that one day my prayers would reach him and my desire would be fulfilled. This process continued every day. Nine days passed. The tenth day was April 30th, Babuji's birthday. In the morning when I sat down for my prayers, a thought occurred to me. Why not put my problems before Babuji and ask him for a solution? With this in my heart, I sat down to pray with complete concentration and with the conviction in my heart that wherever Babuji was, he was listening to my prayers.

Then I said, "Babuji, you are well aware that my Master suffers all the physical hurt and pain himself. He does so much for all of us in spite of that. On your word, he can do much more for this world. If he was here, he would accept my prayers in a second. So why don't you do the same?"

What happened after this is beyond my comprehension. It felt like my insides were closing in on me, and all the empty space left was filled completely by Babuji Maharaj's presence. It sounded like an unknown

voice or tape-recorder going on inside me. The meaning of the words was enough to shake my soul. It was something like this: What you are asking in this prayer is difficult. As yet you are not capable of accepting this kind of responsibility. In your journey, you will reach a stage where disciples feel their guru's pain themselves without having to pray. You will get all this in the future, but as yet you are not worthy of it.

Even in my dreams, I did not expect such a reply. This revelation put paid to my pride. Accepting and absorbing the meaning of those Divine words in my head, I came out of the prayer soon. I felt like a completely changed person.

To understand the personality of a Master is beyond us. One can only understand by becoming like Him. How easily He solved my childish demands and set me on the right path. From that moment on, I bowed my head in respect and awe at my Babuji's feet forever.

"Remembrance is the Instrument"

KATHLEEN SCARBORO, PARIS, FRANCE

I started meditating in July 1988. In 1990, just after Basant, I decided to paint a picture of Babuji. I had been collecting photographs of him for some time, because I always thought he had such a beautiful face. I wanted to do something nice for Chariji because I felt very grateful for everything Sahaj Marg had given me. I also hoped to meet Chariji personally. No doubt, I was hoping for some kind of reward.

At the time, I shared studio space with some other painters, but I decided to paint this picture in my bedroom because the subject was so personal and I didn't want to paint it in front of other people. It took me an entire month working full-time, so in a sense, I prolonged my seminar in this fashion.

For a month I did nothing but paint, eat and sleep, examining Babuji's face with a magnifying glass in order to be as precise as possible. Since I had never actually seen him, I fretted about skin and eye colour, because you couldn't really tell much from the photographs.

One night when the painting was nearly finished, an event took place that changed my life. It was about midnight when I had an extremely vivid dream or vision. I was in a room, and there was a door partially open. I peeped through the opening and Babuji was sitting there! I didn't dare go in, but he beckoned me, so I approached him. Suddenly, I knew that he was mine forever, and that I was His forever. For a time of incalculable length, I followed him around and helped him to sit down and stand up. We even played like two children. Then we were standing, he embraced me, and a tall man (Chariji) came and enveloped us in a large blanket, covering us from head to foot.

Master has appeared to me a number of times since then in dreams or in sittings, but that time was the cornerstone of my abhyas, in the sense that I knew that my master had come for me and claimed me as his own. I believe that every sincere abhyasi has had or will have a similar experience one day.

Later on, when I thought of my desire for a reward, I had to laugh at myself, because although I undoubtedly expected some sort of recognition, I never imagined a reward as immense as the one I received. I still feel very lucky and very undeserving of such a wonderful gift.

I did give Chariji the painting the next time he came to Augerans, and he received it in the most gracious fashion, as is his way.

"I Took Him Into My Heart"

GOVIND RAMACHANDRA RAO, TENNESSEE, USA

In 1994, Babuji Maharaj appeared to me in a dream. I was in a small room with twenty-five to thirty people. All of us were sitting on the floor facing the person who was speaking to us, seated on some sort of pedestal set against a wall. He was quite dark in colour and seemed larger than life, reminding me of the Hindu god, Ganesha. He gestured to us as he spoke. Everyone listened intently. The room was small and there was a hint of incense. Near the speaker, to the right, was a screened partition, the portable type, that hid part of the wall. Most of the people present could not see what was behind the wall, except for a couple of us sitting to the extreme right of the speaker. As I looked up, I clearly saw that there was a door leading to another room behind the screened partition. The door was open and the other room was dark. Babuji Maharaj was standing at the door. He was whispering and coaching the person seated on the pedestal and speaking to us.

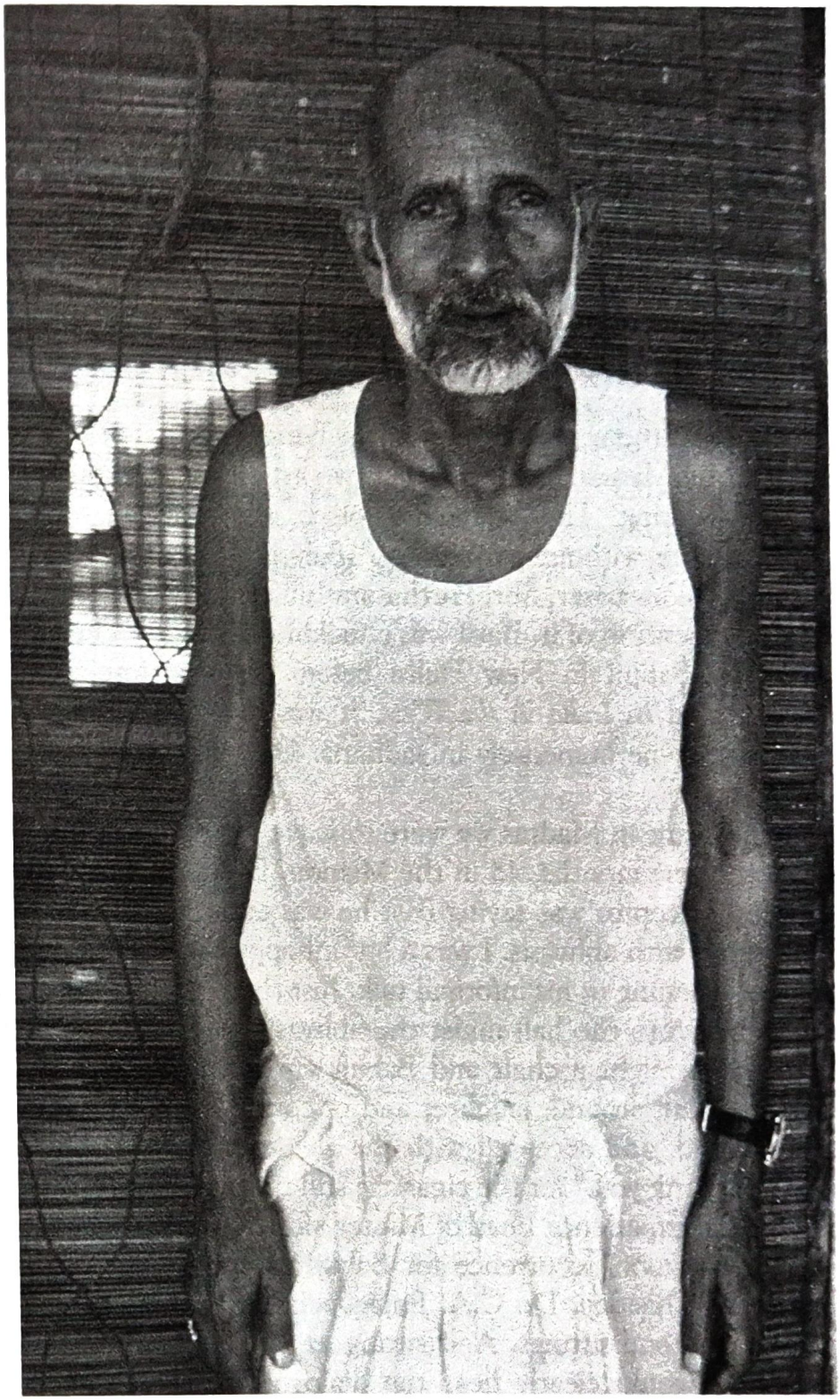
No one else was aware of what was happening. I was suddenly filled with the realisation that Babuji Maharaj and the person speaking to us were one and the same, and that Babuji Maharaj was actually speaking to us through this person. I became very happy and wanted to share this discovery with everyone, but somehow, I could not. I felt sad that the others did not realise this. The next instant, I was outside in the bright sunshine, on the steps of a huge building. A few days after the dream, the thought occurred to me that perhaps it was a message that Babuji Maharaj speaks to us in many different ways, and that if we only looked with an open heart, we would see him everywhere, in everyone and in everything.

"I Appreciate My Associates"

G. PARASU, AHMEDABAD, INDIA

I became an abhyasi in 1993. I had no opportunity of meeting Babuji in his mortal life. He had, however, appeared several times during my sadhana. One such occasion it was September 12, 1995, and my eleventh wedding anniversary. My wife and I had gone to Sister Renuka Kanscera for a sitting. I could see Babuji Maharaj coming towards me with a smiling face and neatly trimmed white beard. He was moving towards me with light, jaunty steps, as one would while playing with children. I do not know what he wanted to convey, but obviously he was happy, and I thought he had come to bless us.

I pray that I may prove worthy of his blessing by working to become what my Master wants me to become.



"Personality Without Personality"

S.M. RAMAMURTHI, BANGALORE, INDIA

Babuji's birthday was celebrated in Bangalore in 1978. As part of my service to the Mission, I contributed two articles to *The Indian Express* where I was working. The personality piece was rounded off with the phrase "personality without personality." Babuji, I was told, was thrilled with that expression. Later, Shri Parthasarathiji, in his valedictory address, made a special mention of it. But I was chuckling inwardly. The expression was coined by Babuji in New Delhi before his first foreign trip and faithfully recorded in *India in the West*. It was a lesson in forgetfulness, which has helped me immensely in sadhana. Giving without being aware of giving.

After Basant in Madras we were to leave for Bangalore the following day. I was a few months old in the Mission. Babuji had retired for the night and our preceptor was saying that he was extremely tired and in no mood to interact with abhyasis. I was a bit unhappy because I did not have the chance of listening to his informal talk. Just then, the door opened and out came Babuji into the hall midst the abhyasis who had unrolled their beds. Someone brought a chair and Babuji sat down. For the next hour there were jokes all around, laughter and of course a smoke, offered by a sister from abroad, and accepted with the glee of a child. Babuji's happy outburst, "Oh thank you," for the cigarette still rings in my ears.

I love the experience I had of Master after his *mahasamadhi* because it was a very common occurrence for Babuji to appear (or should I say commune) with Chachaji, Dr. C.A. Rajagopalachari, when he was giving us individual or group sittings. And sitting as I would just two feet away from the cot, I would clearly hear the dialogue between Chachaji and Babuji. It would run along these lines. "Rammurthy of Indian Express is

here with Sharma... I am giving them a sitting." The rest of the conversation would go past my ears. Once Chachaji was readying for a bath when I walked into the room where he was staying in Bangalore. He directed me to sit in meditation and headed for the bathroom. Eyes closed, I could hear the tap being turned on, the water trickling...and then abrupt silence.

The sitting was deep and absorbing and after the usual 'OM' the mystery of the running water was explained. Chachaji told me in Tamil that he had just gone to have a wash, turned on the tap when Babuji slapped him on the face, chastising, "Look that boy is waiting for you and here you are wasting time in washing your face." Chachaji rushed back to attend to me, wholeheartedly. Later he went down stairs to share the news with family members. "Babuji had come, Babuji had come," he shouted with joy.

"Don't You Feel the Love?"

LISELOTTE TAARUP, COPENHAGAN, DENMARK

When I arrived in Shahjahanpur before sunset in 1978, "I" was nearly forgotten. Only that railway existed, sparkling with insects caught in the rays coming from the cross weave of the vendors' lamps. I saw the mosquitoes dancing on tiny pieces of paper being constantly thrown up into the light by eddying currents of air, how the rickshaw drivers fought over our luggage for the trip to the ashram. There were the open fires of the roadside dwellers, the people milling around, the silhouettes of trees, houses, flowers and bushes along the road, the rickshaw drivers straining every muscle to gain momentum. The cows and pigs rummaging freely. A sense of surprise awoke, as I recognised all these lives, peoples lives through the centuries, whom I had never known and joy, rarely felt so deeply, that this was life. I had lived through so much and would live through it again to reach this moment of eternity. Never had I such an intense rush of joy and warmth, in such total unawareness of self.

Soon, I went in to see Babuji at his house, to thank him for a reply in answer to a letter that I had sent. He hardly looked at me, but said that the meditation would help and that there was no problem that did not have a solution, nothing that we should allow destroy us, and left the room with a man from the West, who rather proudly pronounced to Babuji that there truly were people who didn't understand a thing.

I felt humiliated. First by Babuji who ignored me and by this man who, arrogant to say the least, showed not a glimmer of basic kindness and this sent me into an inner space where I felt a strong anger to what I experienced as an assault. I got a headache that persisted, and became unbearable. The Westerner came and said he had special gifts and could remove this pain. Especially from him I could not take help. And just as it came, so the pain disappeared again.

The meditations revealed that I had a heart and the heart could become closed. They told me that meditation would give me all the answers, but something in me was critical and rejecting. It was not a rejection of Babuji but everything else to do with the Mission and a whole bunch of people. Had I a car, I would have driven through India, through the Middle East and Europe, home to my country.

One day I visited Babuji in his house and felt embraced by the holiness of the atmosphere. Again I forgot everything. I sat on a red stool in front of him. I sat there, forgot time and space, but inside a deep philosophic discussion with my Self began. There was sentence after sentence in Danish and in English and it struck me that it wasn't a conversation between me and myself, but a conversation with another, who was much wiser than me. It surprised me to reflect that it was a conversation with Master. I didn't think more as just then Master turned his head and held my sight so long that I saw his eyes infinitely deep. I saw into his universe and the thoughts stopped. And he took his hookah and with much huffing and puffing got it to work again. Even that I only noticed when he again looked at me turning his head slightly away he said, "Courage and anger are sisters. Goes one, go they both."

That was his direct welcome. And what a welcome. I was full of anger. I was a person that held a vulnerability and an anger. Not only in Shahjahanpur, also in my own country. It was my fate. My survival had been a mixture of courage and anger. "Goes one, go they both." I was understood. I was not alone. One person in this world knew my condition, my prerequisite for survival.

The next day I heard more about courage. Yes, but anger, what about anger? I judged that courage was good and anger something bad, a power so strong that I knew its destructive potential. It was anger that I tried to hide, to change, to discipline, to account for and to control, but He wanted people with courage.

The day before I left I went to see Babuji. It was difficult for me to understand what Babuji said, therefore a Danish abhyasi came with me. Babuji looked up and asked me what I wanted. I said I was overcome "I wanted..."—my mind was blank. There was no memory of all the questions meeting Him had awoken in me throughout the time I had been in

Shahjahanpur. I had been sceptical that this Mission could develop into all that is well known, faction against faction, like Calvinists, Catholics, Protestants, if it wasn't for his living presence and the seed that he had planted as I had witnessed it daily. My daily thought, which I kept to myself, was that there was something absolutely bizarre with us humans and that Babuji's work, his Love, was up against the impossible, ourselves.

My companion said, "Didn't you want to ask about suggestion?" In Danish this translates closer to indoctrination or hypnotism. I turned around without remembering why I should want to talk about suggestion. Had I spoken about that? Now, thoughts that Babuji had hypnotised me were gone as I sat there just in front of Him on the carpet, Babuji remained attentive. "Suggestion..." he said smiling, and his eyes smiled. What a smile. I had never seen a person smile as Babuji smiled.

Babuji bent his head over at an angle and asked with a warmth that reached every cell of my body, "Don't you feel the love?" Oh yes, I could feel nothing but love. Hopeless question. I smiled and Babuji laughed so much that he rocked and nearly fell over backwards. I watched him fall like a scene from a movie played in slow motion. He carried on laughing and rocking around on the floor.

"What are you called?" he wanted to know and I told him my name. With a gesture of his hands he indicated that he wanted his fountain pen. He put on glasses and took out a little black book bound in waxed cloth, worn through—an old, unglamorous book which belonged to history not to the present. He flicked through the pages until he came to a blank sheet. So, he took out his fountain pen, took the top off, put it on again. Inspected that fountain pen just as long as he had rocked around the floor laughing so heartily, my heart melted...and he asked me again to spell my name. He could not understand it. I began to spell. A number of others joined in and spelled with me. The letters were said in Urdu, in Hindi, in English. Babuji wrote them down in his worn little black book, one by one and asked once in a while about a sound. Letter by letter was printed in his book. The pen got turned around, so the letters became clearer. The next letter and again the pen was turned and twisted. Two years passed. Seven years passed. Twenty years. He finished writing my name. First name. Family name. I did not see what he wrote, but I guessed he'd written a whole lot more than my

name. Maybe he wrote the date. Maybe something completely different. I couldn't think anymore. What happened in that moment was the whole world. Now he was no longer laughing.

He bent down towards me and said, "You must continue to meditate. Through this you will find the answers. When love comes it will itself explode. Have you not felt the love?" Oh yes. Babuji said that there were so many people to develop and that he was glad about it—the more the merrier. It was good that there were people to do the work. Yes, the more that would do the work the better and spirituality would grow. There were many individuals to develop and therefore He had created Sahaj Marg. "If you think that there is a God, and you attach yourself to that God with love, the love must expand. Everything you attach yourself to will expand. By attaching yourself to Master or God or with one you consider the highest, by doing that and meditating so will doubt disappear. When I met my Master I was in doubt. I was in doubt for seven years. Write to me and tell me everything."

Since then the recognition has come that we can end conflicts, if we give up fighting. That we will be humbled, if we are not humble. That we receive love, if we dare to love. That we can give our labour, if we are willing to work. That we can care for each other and love will change everything, if we make the choice. Because there are no separations other than those we make ourselves and that distance is created because we fight to survive and know no other way.

But "If there is no problem if there is no solution," said Babuji. Nothing we should allow ourselves to be destroyed by. He shows us that we change ourselves, that something deeper within us is working. The wonder is that it happened in a few days and it was recalled without any doubt and with the understanding that meant that Babuji was the Person whom we all had to seek. Life could not continue without that vital connection: a clear, recognisable realisation of the central issue of life.

Seven years later, I became a preceptor in Assam. Precisely seven years, such as Babuji had told me he had no doubt. Seven years to become sure about what I believed in and to understand the cultural patterns of the West. I have since felt Babuji made a long term plan, which I am still living.

"When You Hear a Voice from Your Heart, Leave Dancing"

BABUBHAI PATEL, AHMEDABAD, INDIA

On my accepting Babuji as my Master, I went to Shahjahanpur and stayed with him in his house for a few days. It was the time when the Shahjahanpur Ashram was under construction and slowly taking shape due to financial circumstances. Once Babuji was discussing funds available to fix kota stone in the meditation hall. I was quite a new abhyasi and so I was afraid to speak, but my heartbeat increased and pushed me to offer marble for the meditation hall. Babuji looked towards me for a while and refused to accept my offer (clearly he read my position as only one of the partners in the Marble Quarry, which may put me in trouble). I went on pursuing, but he refused, saying "*Ye to bahuet mohnga hota hai*," even though I had offered at a price lower than kota stone. I was disappointed and returned to Ahmedabad. But my partner, Shri Devrambhai, encouraged me and said, "Write a letter after some time."

After three or four months, I wrote a letter to Babuji Maharaj asking him to accept the offer. He responded and called me to Shahjahanpur. I went there along with Shri Devrambhai and convinced Babuji to fix the flooring of the meditation hall. The marble was supplied and the work was completed. Babuji was very happy and showed everybody the beauty of the marble. He was so happy that he used to show the marble flooring like a baby child. This happiness and praising among the abhyasis made me known as Babubhai Marbleswala. Babuji used to say *Sange-Murmer*, Urdu word for marble. That is how everybody used to know me as 'Sange-Murmerwala Babubhai', which developed subtle ego, making

me ignorantly happy. And nothing is hidden from the great Master, who is always watching the progress of an aspirant.

During Basant Utsav 1975 or 1976 in the morning meditation a thought passed through my mind that if Babuji reads the mind and knows my thoughts, then he may give me a special sitting during Basant Utsav. Then I scolded myself for having such thoughts and I started repenting and begging forgiveness during morning meditation. Then I felt lighter and forgot.

At three thirty PM that day I was coming to the ground floor of the dormitory building where Pujya Babuji was staying in a small room opposite the staircase and Shri Gunde Rao opened the door of the room. He saw me and requested me to attend Babuji until he came back from the toilet. I was happy and entered the room where Pujya Babuji was lying in bed. He saw me and got up from the bed and stared at me and asked in Hindi, "Who are you? I am not able to recognise you." I told him my name. Three times he repeated, until I had to say, "I am Babubhai, who supplied the marble in the ashram." Then he expressed his apology that he could not recognise me. "Ah, Babubhai Sange-Murmerwala, please forgive me."

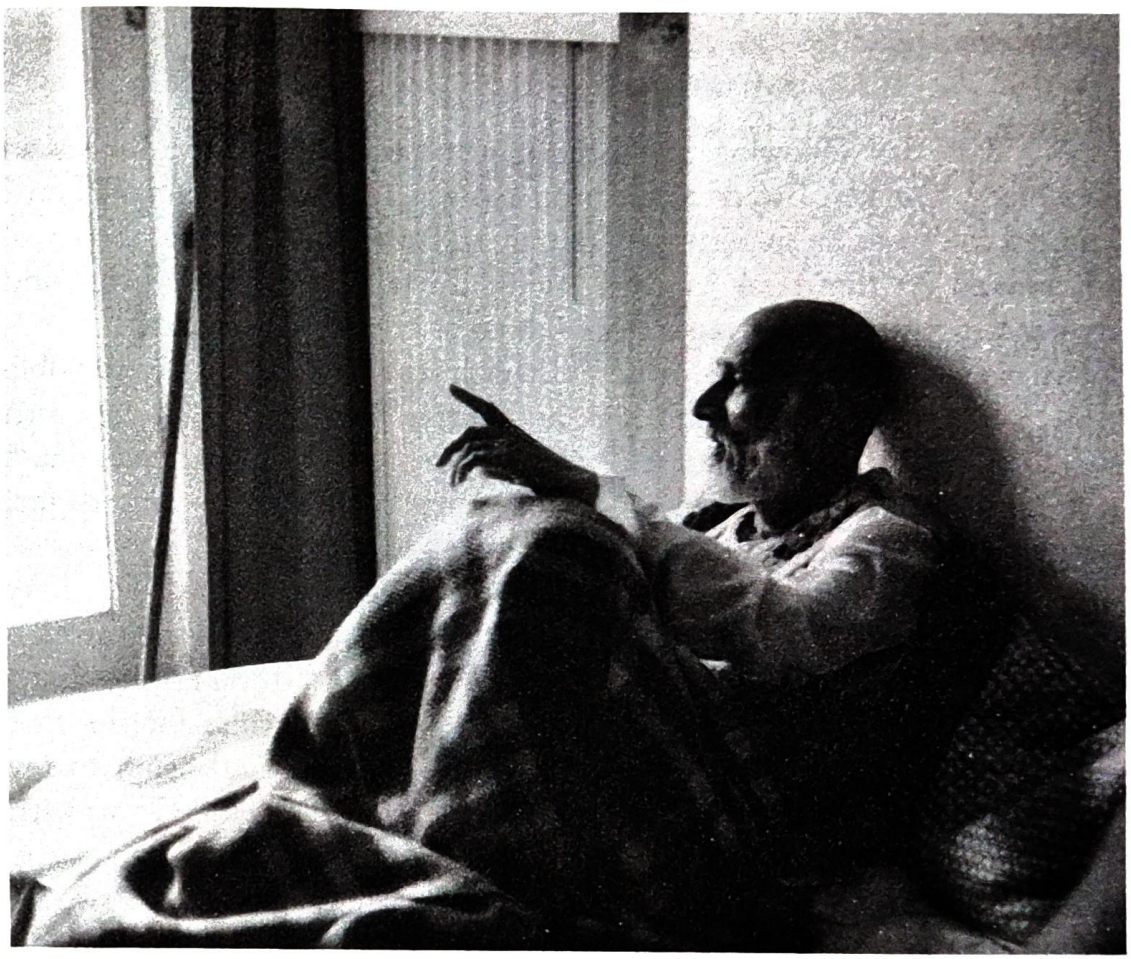
He invited me to sit beside him three times but I refused politely and sat on Shri Gunde Rao's cot in front of him. He started staring at me, which made me fill with fear. All of a sudden he said, "Babubhai, I want to give you a sitting for ten minutes. Will you please sit!" I was shivering because of my thought in the morning meditation. He gave me a sitting, which made me more or less mad; I could not control myself. I went around singing, which lasted for fifteen to twenty days even at home. From this event I knew he cut my ego and also taught me not to test Master's ability.

Once I was sitting before him in the veranda of his house when every half an hour I used to run to the toilet. So Babuji asked what is the trouble. I said, "Babuji I am a patient of chronic dysentery which troubles me too much, since the last six years." He laughed and told me that Kashiram was a gold medalist naturopath. Then he called Kashiram and told him my history. Kashiram laughed and said something to Babuji in Hindi. Pujya Babuji laughed and said, "*Thick hai.*"

Doctors, vaidya, vuani, homeopath, all had treated me during the six years, but no remedy. I was really much worried but Pujya Babuji removed the trouble within fifteen days, just by prescribing boiled vegetables and curd.

I was very fond of alcohol, and used to arrange parties with friends and company executives even after joining the Mission. Once, in 1981, I was leaving for the US and the UK and so before going I went to Shahjahanpur to see Babuji Maharaj. Next morning I was called to his house at nine o'clock and when I arrived he told me to sit in his room for *puja*. He reclined as usual and stared at me and all of a sudden, sitting up straight, he smiled and told me, "Babubhai, I am very happy. Ask whatever you want, I will give you." I was shocked and also very happy, I could not think. I said, "Let me remain always at your lotus feet." He laughed and said to sit in meditation. After finishing Babuji again stared at me and then slowly whispered to me, "Babubhai, *ye bhi to nasha*. I tell you *dossra nasha* can damage a tiny nerve of the brain at any time, which I may not repair." Then he told me smilingly, "You go abroad, enjoy fully, but when you hear a voice repeatedly from your heart, leave dancing." I was stunned, I had not told Him, he read everything and advised me.

When I was touring African countries, a craving 'voice' started and on my return journey I told my wife, "I will not touch drinks any more." She laughed and challenged, but I left alcohol forever by the blessings of our beloved Babuji Maharaj.



"Bloominess Not Gloominess"

KIRSTIN SANTOS, GEORGIA, USA

The day following my meeting with preceptor Raj Mangat in Winnipeg, Canada, I went to his house to get a book from him. When I entered the room he showed me a picture of Babuji and gave me a copy of *My Master*. As that book touched my hand I felt a jolt in the heart and during the days that followed, tears flowed as the truth of Parthasarathi's heart resounded within my own. This book was to me the only tangible thing I had ever held that felt real, and during the days that it was with me, I carried it inside my blouse. It was such a precious thing to me, like a love letter, my love letter, the only thing I had which allowed me to feel my own heart and reason for being, so completely.

This year marks my twenty years of practice as an abhyasi. My diary entry in 1978 describes my initial meeting with Babuji, "Walking through the courtyard of his home I felt the same quietness, rest, total respite that I felt upon entering the ashram in Shahjahanpur. Seeing him for the first time could be expressed only as coming home." Again and again in my diary the words "sweet, sweet nothingness" were recorded while I was with him. The condition of 'nothingness', which I later heard referred to as the ultimate condition, was given at the beginning and perceived as 'sweet', the feeling of Babuji, the person. Perhaps it was his simplicity and innocence.

As we sat with him during those days, immersed in His atmosphere, with the gurgling sound of his hookah, he responded to questions which were often put just to hear him speak. "What is realisation?" Babuji answered, "If you search realisation you waste your time. Don't worry about any sort of stages and thus don't waste your time. Simply you try to merge in Master. Rest your mind in God the Almighty, everything will

follow. Every question is pregnant with answers. How to get the answer? By delivering a child."

During that visit one day I fumbled my way through a question about becoming a preceptor. Babuji replied, "It is necessary to live in the correct way only. Then people who see will be drawn to the light. It is enough that I am here in Shahjahanpur. Only mention that you are meditating and the system is Sahaj Marg. When you feel some disturbance, think in God." With those words I felt empty and free.

The second opportunity to be with Babuji came in Denmark in 1980. One morning Babuji was very jolly and wanted to see a reindeer. He said, "We need not only go to the Centre, we need to go to the zoo." This gave all of us a feeling of being children with such lightness of spirit, wonder and joy. He also said, "Laugh and grow fat."

In Malaysia in 1981, Nancy Henke and I shared breakfast, chatting about Babuji, then left for Mr. Reddy's house where Babuji was staying. When we went into his room to greet him he told Parthasarathi, "These girls have come and already the work has begun. How can it be stopped?" After meditation, Babuji answered some questions:

Abhyasi: Can you speak of ego?

Babuji: Ego is becoming identity.

Abhyasi: Is it necessary to have individual identity?

Babuji: Yes, they will become one at the time of *Mahapralaya*. Other comments: Nothing is lost. Only change happens. Do not think of the ego because it strengthens. Miracles are performed through the help of Nature. When you attend to God, it is not the way of miracles. Construction is our work, not destruction. Difficulties come very soon. Earnestness comes afterward.

Abhyasi: So, we must live a moral and disciplined life?

Babuji: That is the usual sacrifice.

Babuji spoke for some time after meditation that day and several times he spoke to me directly. "It is because we are all brothers and sisters that we are able to sit together and laugh, not Mahatmas. When you have thoughts during meditation don't check them because that gives them strength."

A lovely Babuji pearl was recounted by Grace Kimball: "Why all this gloominess? Why not some bloominess?" Bloominess was certainly the flavour of that day.

On May 6th Nancy and I picked up Tom Whitlam on our way to K.V. Reddy's house. Babuji was reading a book about Einstein. He looked very 'professorial' with his glasses on, lying on the bed with book in hand, although he never turned any pages. The book was also upside down! Babuji and Parthasarathi had a conversation.

Babuji: What Einstein calls dawn of new life, Master prefers to call Secret of Nature. The difficulty with these men is that they don't expand their thoughts.

Parthasarathi: (directed to preceptors.) Take what you see in the heart and expand it so that you can see what it is. This also applies to ideas. If you go into the subtlest you will find infinity. God was alone so He created and then there were many. You can never see God but you can feel Him. We chase after Him. When we meditate, we draw the source to us and experience it in time but there is more beyond.

Babuji: There is one Reality. The rest is infinity. When we turn our glance from Reality, Nature throws out whatever diverts from Nature. This is what happens with thoughts during meditation.

Parthasarathi: From evolution you go back to involution. As we become smaller and smaller, we go into the universe and towards infinity. Every atom is an epitome of the universe. Rather than expanding outward through the universe to the outer circumferences, we move toward the centre in dimension. In the beginning we do more of the work. As we go on, we surrender more and more and the work becomes easier because our own resistance is not there. Master takes over. Closer to the centre the Master becomes absolutely necessary.

Reflecting on these days and recognising the experience of the time, while feeling the condition now, leaves me in wonder. So, what is it that has happened between then and now through association with that Person who represents the centre of existence? It is for Him to know and for me to live. And from a hopeful romantic it could be said that He is the kiss of true love as told in the tale of 'Sleeping Beauty', that which awakens Life in life.

"My Work is Going On, Do Not Worry!"

YASHVANTI N. RATHOD, CHENNAI, INDIA

Many of us believe that due to us some people became abhyasis, but it is my firm conviction that unless He wills it nobody can become an abhyasi of Sahaj Marg sadhana.

In our family it was my son who first joined our Mission. For two long years he tried hard to draw me into the system by telling me so many anecdotes about Rev. Babuji and I used to read the literature, but I had no mind to join, and always excused myself for some reason or other. So much so that when Babuji visited Ahmedabad, my son insisted that I should at least go to the public meeting that his Master would address. I was not so inclined though I told all my colleagues in the school to go and meet with a great saint.

The night before the event, when I saw my son so disappointed by my obstinacy, I agreed to go and early in the morning my son went to the venue happy that I would follow. But it was not to be. I got a bout of diarrhoea so that I just could not go even though I now wished to do so. My conclusion was that Babuji did not will it to be because as yet the ground was not ready.

After two years and a lot of further persuasion, meanwhile my husband had joined, I took a first sitting and to my surprise during that, my cherished concept of God totally changed. Now I feel that during those two years Master had done thorough ploughing in readiness for the spiritual seed.

Soon after, Babuji came to Ahmedabad. By then I was absolutely 'in it' and my joy knew no bounds at the thought that I would see Master in person. When I arrived at satsangh at Br. Dahyabhai's house, I was overwhelmed when I saw Babuji sitting on a cot holding a small bowl in his

hand and eating something with a spoon. It was a childlike way of eating and his face was innocence itself. I could do nothing but gaze at him with my mind turned off to anything else.

Then he came from that room to the meditation hall and sat in the special place prepared for him. There were too many cushions around him and he moved his feet around in an effort to get comfortable. After about five minutes he got up to return to his bed. A thought flashed through my mind, "He is now old and so weak, how can he do his work?" Babuji turned back to the audience, raised up his joined hands still holding his walking stick and said, "Though I am physically unwell my work is going on, do not worry!" I was stunned and felt very much ashamed that I had dared to judge him.

Another experience of how the Master worked on us: I was fast asleep after my prayer-meditation when suddenly I found myself shivering as though currents passed through the whole of my body. I could not control it or understand what it was. So I just sat up still shivering in a way I had never done before or since, realising that it was the result of transmission pouring down. I closed my eyes and started meditating. Even today when I remember that, my hair stands on end.

"In the End There is Neither 'I' nor 'You' "

JEANNE MICHEL LETERREUX, LE BEAUSSET, FRANCE

In the mornings we would go to see Babuji at his home and in the afternoons he would come over to the ashram. One morning we arrived at his house and Babuji was seated in his armchair smoking his hookah. I tried desperately to encounter His gaze, but his eyes were turned towards the Infinite and I didn't understand this; so I pouted. I sat a little apart, my back against a pillar which was facing his door. Then, just at that moment something intense happened inside me and there began a play between Babuji and me. Babuji passed by in front of me, went back into his room, stayed there a moment, then came back out, went to sit for a few moments in his arm chair, took up his hookah. His coming and going lasted awhile and always this intense thing manifested itself in the deepest part of me which was absent to the present. I couldn't put words on what I was going through, the only thing I said to myself was, "He knows." And I understood later the work that he had done on me was preparing me to encounter His new physical form.

During the evening of our departure he asked us to leave the ashram earlier and wait at his home for our train time, which was late at night. While we were waiting, something like a message was given to me, something which grabbed me in the gut, "Look at me, well, active, smoking my hookah, speaking, pottering about, because this is the last time you'll see me this way." And it was the last.

That evening a dozen of us left. Rickshaws awaited us and we climbed into them and were on our way, one behind the other Indian fashion, through the dark streets of Shahjahanpur to the station. We could hear the pedals turning and each of us held a lighted pocket lamp. There was an indescribable atmosphere.

I returned to India for Basant 1984 which took place in Madras. When I got back to Marseilles after being with Chariji, I came into the centre and spoke out, "I've found my Master in Chariji!" It's unnecessary to tell you that in those days I might just as well have tossed a bomb. A word to finish off: Create space within yourself and the rest will be given to you.

"Tabiyat To Teek Hai Na Beti"

UMA MULLAPUDI, OHIO, USA

I had a camera and I was trying to take pictures of Babuji, and an old man with black glasses tapped on my shoulder and said, "First lesson when you take pictures is to take the lens cap off." He introduced himself as Rajagopalachari and I jumped with joy and said, "I'm your fan because I read your book *My Master* and I just love it." He laughed and said, "It is my son who wrote that book. Please come to Madras. My son will take pictures–it's his hobby."

I said okay. It is amazing to look back to 1977 and notice that what Chariji's father said came true in 1986, when I met Master in Lebanon, New Jersey. I saw Babuji in this gathering, whenever he came on the dais to give a sitting. I would be sitting in the front row staring at him. I thought Babuji was a loving old man. Somehow when I went back to school, such immense love started in me for Babuji that I practised Sahaj Marg sincerely, attending satsangh regularly. My college zoology professor was a preceptor, so whenever I passed her door she would catch hold of me and give me a sitting. I used to attend gatherings whenever Babuji came to South India and also whenever Sister Kasturi came to Tirupathi. Chariji's father used to write to me and he would send my letters back to me with lots of corrections in my English.

But my most important encounter happened in the year 1981 when Babuji returned from Malaysia. I was very sick and depressed and my parents took me to him. Babuji was staying in his son Umesh's house in Madras, and my preceptor somehow managed to push me into his room where he was lying down with his hand under his head. I fell at his feet and would not get up. People were trying to pull me back but Babuji signalled to them to stop. When finally I got up he was looking at me, and for the

first time I looked into his eyes, those deep eyes that people always talked about and I felt something deep inside and that look just stayed with me. Babuji told my preceptor I was going through my *bhog*. By February 1982, I was married. Somehow when he looked at me that day, he changed my future. The next few years were full of intense *bhog*.

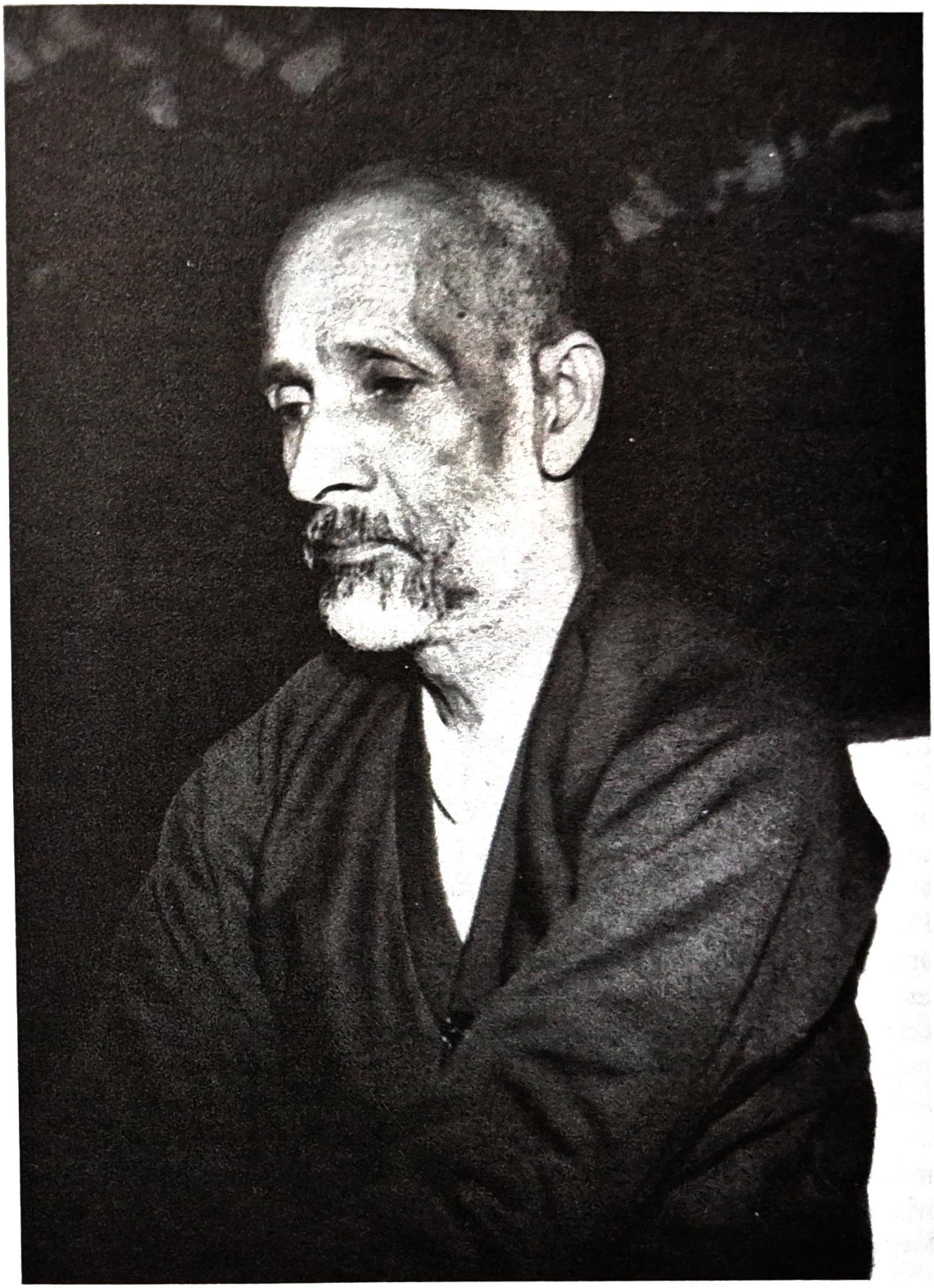
When Babuji passed away in April 1983, I was on my way to Madras when we got the news. I was crying and begging my parents to take me to Chariji, because he would be going to Shahjahanpur. My parents were worried and stopped me from going but my husband eventually let me go to the Shahjahanpur Ashram. They had built a temporary *samadhi* and the ashes were in pots, still there. I meditated near his *samadhi*, my heart crying: Is this true? Is he really gone? What's going to happen to me? What am I supposed to do? I stayed three days feeling cleaning going on in me as usual. He was gone physically, but I received everything from Him. I left for USA within a few weeks, feeling an emptiness inside me.

And then in the year 1985, before I met Chariji, I had a vision. I was sitting with a group of abhyasis discussing Christ and there was a book in which Shri Ram Chandraji of Shahjahanpur and Fatehgarh was written and suddenly a tall man wearing a lungi with a towel around his neck walked in. My heart felt that he was Lalaji—that's how my heart was feeling even though he did not look like Lalaji. I immediately prostrated to him and said, "I am surrendering to you, please take me to the Centre."

He put both his hands on my head and said, "You are already there but you don't know it because of your samskaras." When I later met Master in 1986, I recognised that it was Master that I saw that night. (I had missed Chariji's visit in 1985 because my father had passed away.)

In the year 1986, I finally wrote to Master in deep distress when I had a premature baby who was in the hospital. The day Master wrote back to me was the day the baby passed away, which was a blessing for the child. Master asked me to come to New Jersey. I had no money to go but the lady I was baby sitting for was going on a vacation exactly the same week that Master was there and she bought me a ticket. I little realised then that it was his grace that enabled me to go see him.

The first night I was in Master's room he was taking pictures of some abhyasis and my heart was going crazy. I came all this way and this



man is taking pictures and he probably does not even know my name. We were asked to leave and my heart was in pain, I wanted my Babuji right now. I whispered in Diana Waycott's ear, "Can I stay for one more second?" Master suddenly looked to our side and said, "What does Uma want?" Diana said, "She wants to stay for one more second."

He looked at me and asked me to come close and sit next to him on the bench, I was crying. He looked into my eyes and said, "You can stay for two minutes," and they were the same eyes that I saw back in 1981 in Madras, looking at me telling me He was not gone. The same depth and the same love. There was immense joy after three years of crying for Babuji; I had finally found Him again. Somebody passing by said Uma is crying because she is emotional. But Master said she is crying because she is happy. And that was the truth and only he knew it. Also, I realised what Master's father had told me about his son's photography had come true, for Master took my picture while I was crying.

After meeting Master I often saw him and Babuji together and once after watching a movie I was very disturbed, feeling that I never had experienced falling in love, or meeting the so-called soul mate. I loved Babuji and I was married to my husband. That night I foolishly prayed to be shown my soul mate. At four AM I had a vision. I was lying in my bed and Babuji came to me and I said, "Babuji you have come," and He was saying something and slapping me on both my cheeks with both his hands and I asked him to repeat it. He said in Hindi, "*Tabiyat to teek hai na beti?*" He was asking me if my health was okay. It was his subtle way of humour and then I was writing something and Chariji appeared looking seriously at me saying, "We have no time to lose, Uma." I said, "Yes Master," and I continued working and when I looked down to see what I was doing, I was making copies of the alphabet. I was telling myself, "I have to make copies and distribute." I didn't realise Master was still there. He said, "You make copies I will distribute." It was very significant for me for He was helping me realise that it was a preceptor's job to teach alphabets, but it was he who distributes. When I woke up I was grateful that the only man I fell in love with in all my lifetimes were Babuji and my living Master.

I had another vision in 1993, during the period that Master was in South Africa. A black man and a white man were fighting and we were all

watching and Swami Vivekananda appeared. I was elated because Swamiji came to watch this. My daughter was next to me telling me to give my ring to Swamiji so that he could charge it. I said we did not need to do that for our Master was there for us. Then Swami Vivekenanda climbed up the steps. Chariji was there; Swamiji said something to him and went inside. As soon as I saw Master, I was happily calling, "Master, Master," but he didn't recognise me. As I was wondering, another Chariji walked up the stairs and both Charijis were talking to each other. I was elated seeing two Masters. The second Chariji looked down at me and smiled. When I awoke I was seeing both Masters as Chariji. The Master in the divine form, Babuji did not recognise me, but the human master did. I was just grateful to my Lord Master, for having chosen me for this spiritual path.

Every moment my heart remembers that just because of Babuji's one glance at me I am where I am today, my feet steady, following my master, Chariji. Babuji wrote about Lalaji that with a blink of an eye he could change anyone and give them liberation, the same thing applies to Babuji and Chariji.

"The Dust of Whose Feet..."

S.S. RAMAKRISHNAN, COIMBATORE, INDIA

It was the time of the big crisis of the hungry millions of Bangladesh pouring into India in 1971 when I told Indian friends in America about our Mission. They asked me, "Why does your Master not help these hungry millions and guide India?" They asked me to write to him and Babuji replied:

October, 1971

"My Dear Ramakrishnan,

...Interested persons will join the Mission if they are made to know the efficacy of the system. One who has not known the throne of the king, how can he admire it? Rama, Krishna, Mohammed and Christ could not remove the misery, poverty and injustice of the world. World is the home of disparities and contradictions. If these things are brought to a balanced state there will be no world! If everything comes to the balanced state, it will corroborate with the original balanced state when there was no creation. When the balance was disturbed then the world came into existence. Nobody can succeed in bringing the state of balance in the world. If the contradictions be removed, the mind will not work and then what will be the condition of a human being? An animal in the form of man.

So, you can tell your friends like this. Please keep this letter safe, so that you may be able to reply such questions.

Yours affectionately,
Ram Chandra."

Babuji came to America in May 1972 and after a lot of publicity, which attracted about a hundred persons, it was natural to expect a meditation centre and a preceptor to be created in Troy and Babuji

unexpectedly chose to give me permission to work. I had joined the Mission in India over four years before but still I said that I felt totally unfit, a pipe which transferred pure water should be clean and pure itself. It was then that Babuji advised me, "Confidence is very important. I feel confident that I can dissolve the whole universe and recreate it! I may not be able to do it but I feel confident that I can do it!"

In my car there was a sticker, "I think I can." It was a line from a poem in a book on positive thinking by Norman Vincent Peale. Babuji looked at it and said, "Remove this 'I think' part from this sticker. It shows doubt. 'I can' is enough." Charji heartily agreed with him. They had carried positive thinking to such a stage of perfection.

On the day I was made a preceptor I was asked to fast for a full day. Nor did I smoke, although Babuji said he did not forbid cigarettes. I skipped lunch, but in the night, Babuji told me, "No restrictions now! If you want, you can eat tonight." Someone offered food twice and I refused. Then Babuji made a cryptic remark, "Do not wait for the third time!" I wish I knew what He meant.

Later that day, Babuji seemed to be talking about the choice of his successor. He said that Lalaji had promised long ago to make the selection of the successor; Babuji was to go on making preceptors—even ten thousand if necessary!

The second night I was sleeping on the floor in the same room as Babuji and Chariji. On waking up, I felt that somebody or some spirit was perhaps entering me. When I told this to Chariji years later, he said sometimes the Master took out the astral body, cleaned it and put it back.

The day after I was made a preceptor, Babuji asked me to give a sitting to Chariji and Dr. R.P. Singh. We all three sat on a carpet on the floor and Babuji sat behind them on a sofa. I prayed to Master to transmit the central power from the heart, and continued meditation. One person's condition looked red and warm and another person's looked green and cold. After twenty minutes Babuji said, "Okay, stop it. That is enough." Then he said, "It is good. Are you confident now?" Chariji also shook his head and said, "Good."

After Master left Troy, I suddenly felt restless to see him before he left America, because who knew when I could see Him again? So, I

travelled overnight to Washington DC, to be with him during the last day of his stay in America. As soon as I met him he asked me, "Are people coming to you?" "Yes," I said "but only about ten or fifteen, although two hundred attended our meetings." "Many are called but few are chosen," Babuji and Parthasarathi said together. As an aside, Babuji told Chariji, "All right, Ramakrishnan will do the work." This apparently casual remark stayed in my memory, and gave me courage and confidence to overcome many days of despair and despondency in later years.

In the car ride from Washington, DC, to New York (JFK International Airport), we stopped in wayside restaurants for food. Master noted that paper was being used to dry wet hands, for wrapping, and also for eating plates and drinking cups. He remarked with a laugh, "This is a paper civilisation!" Then he asked me, "*Arre*, what do they mean when they say 'bread,' here? They mean 'double-roti', baked bread. In northern India, we call chapati bread." Some such trivial talk he always made with different people, perhaps to reassure them that he was noticing them using such moments of intimacy to unobtrusively implant deep within each person his love and remembrance. The abhyasi cherishes such moments all his life, though they may look trivial to onlookers.

Another place where paper cups and plates attracted his attention was in my small flat in Troy, New York. He was aghast at the way thick waxed paper cups and paper plates were used only once, and thrown away. It prompted him to ask me how much I earned and how much I saved. He even asked me if I couldn't reuse the cups! He was always unhappy with the 'throw-away' culture. He always avoided all wastage and any excess payment, and this went hand in hand with his unique and unparalleled generosity and hospitality, which would sacrifice anything for his guests' comfort.

About a year after Babuji's return to India I wrote to him before I went home in the middle of my PhD studies. He wrote me such a welcoming letter:

My dear Ramakrishnan,

Received your affectionate letter Please do come and I will be available. My home address is given under:

'Mahalla Diwan Jograj, (near Carewgang). An iron gate is fixed in my house. It lies in the lane and in the beginning of the lane is a stone with inscription 'Shri Ram Chandra Mission Marg' fixed. The inscription is in Hindi.

Yours affectionately,
Ram Chandra.

But due to parental attachments I spared only one day for Shahjahanpur. He was disappointed and said that I had given him too little time to do the work. He liked people to be there for three days for that purpose.

After finishing my studies in America I returned to India in May 1975 and went first to see Babuji. When I offered a donation for the Mission on this trip, he refused it totally. He said I was as yet jobless, fresh from higher studies. "After getting a job you can think of giving money to the Mission! There is also your sister's marriage coming next month for which your father has to spend and you must help him!" When I got to Coimbatore, I learnt that Babuji had prayed for my getting a job. I was deeply touched by this and I soon did get a job.

One cold morning in 1976 Babuji praised the medicinal benefits of brandy in various illnesses. He said that he might get a liquor permit to enable him to buy brandy, since there was prohibition then. He told how brandy could revive people in severe cold when it was rubbed on the soles of their feet or if they sipped a few drops. Parthasarathi said, "You have forbidden alcohol. Of course if you get a permit, I can get it too." Then someone said, "Babuji, already these orthodox Hindus find it difficult to accept that you smoke hookah. If they see you praise brandy's benefits, they will be upset." Babuji replied, "I may go to hell, but I will push everybody else out of hell." I asked, "Babuji, what about people who will be ready to follow you to hell?" I thought that there will be many such people hoping that I will also be counted among them. But Babuji pointed at someone and said, "He is that person." When I turned to see who it was, it was Parthasarathi.

I was sitting in front of him in 1976 praying for his health and a thought came to me, "Unless I become like you Master, this Sahaj Marg sadhana has not borne fruit." He did not say anything, but he got up to go

to the bathroom. I walked with him, and he seemed to slip once and caught my shoulder to steady himself. After coming back, he said something that may have been in response to my earlier thought, "Give your heart to God, and become restless." Sister Kasturi said, "Give your heart to Master." Babuji corrected her, "No, give your heart to God!" After Master said, "What is *bhakti* [devotion]? It is to be a slave at the threshold of the Master!" Then he asked me if I understood. After that he told me to repeat it, to see if I got it right. He said he wanted to hear it. When I repeated it, he said, "All right."

The following year, a sister from Ahmedabad was talking to Babuji cheerfully, but seemed moved by something at one point and told him, "Babuji, some people are able to talk to you very often, they are closer to you." Babuji answered clearly, "I am equally close to everybody. I talk when there is some work, some business, but I am close to all."

When Babuji took leave of us from the ashram in 1978 he suddenly turned back again towards us on his own and raised his hands in benediction and blessing, and brought them down palms downward. Then he left without a single word. May I never forget that all my life!

After my marriage I developed a deep depression and even deterioration in my spiritual condition. I wrote to Babuji and also my sister who went to see Him. He said something to her about "Will Power. Before my sister returned, to Coimbatore he said, "Will power is needed. Also you must fix up the Goal." When my sister and mother took leave of Babuji he told them, like a message, "Do everything in constant remembrance. Do everything for the Lord's mercy. Increase digestive capacity." Mrs. Rao asked Babuji, "Please give us that love you had for Lalaji." Babuji replied, "Beti, you cannot bear it; it is unbearable."

1982 was the last time I would see Babuji in Shahjahanpur He was sick but there was some work for me at Babuji's house and so I got permission to go. I did not intend to try to meet Babuji as it would disturb his rest, but the minute I came through the gate Babuji waved his hand and very softly but clearly said, "Come."

Later, he told me that the Paris celebrations were to complete ten years of his first visit to the West. He was ill, but felt committed to going. "I must go," he said, "after all they have made arrangements. They have

spent five lakh rupees." I said, "But your health is the most important thing, most valuable. If your health is all right, everything depends on your well-being, so please give it top priority." Then Babuji said, "If Parthasarathi comes then no trouble, no difficulty." "Then he must come?" I asked. Babuji said, "He must have been invited. But I do not know, I have not heard from him." Then he dictated a letter:

My dear Parthasarathi, pain in the stomach has started, and weakness is continuing. But I cannot cancel travelling because I am committed. Will it be possible for you to take leave from ...

Babuji stopped and asked, "What are the dates of the Paris celebration?" When I asked the joint secretary of the Mission about the dates he came to Babuji and said, "Babuji, don't strain yourself when you are ill. We will write tomorrow." That was that. I do not know if it was done.

After I got back to Madras, I told Parthasarathi everything that Babuji told me about his ill health, weakness and deeply felt need of his company and assistance in Paris. Chariji was very happy to go with Babuji, but told me that I could have brought the typed letter signed by Babuji.

My next visit to Babuji was to The All India Institute of Medical Science in Delhi in October 1982. His eyes and mouth were closed, no talk, no look. It was the last time I was to see his physical form although I did not know it at the time.

The only place we can ever hope to see Babuji is in His successor Chariji. In Troy in 1972, Babuji told me, "I meditate on myself." I did not understand the relevance of this statement until I remembered it in 1993 in Coimbatore when I discovered a senior preceptor was meditating on Babuji's form. His condition was not good. I reminded him that Babuji had written that he had meditated on Lalaji's form during the lifetime of Lalaji. But he (Babuji) told me in 1972 that he meditated on himself. "So, the form of meditation changed for Him," I said. "Similarly, the form of the Master has changed, the form on which you meditated has been discarded by the Master, and it does not exist any more. If you meditate on Babuji what you meditate on is not reality, does not exist in the present even at the physical level." In fact, Babuji's statement to me was, "I meditate on myself," not even "I meditate on my own form," nor Lalaji's form.

Adapted from extracts of Reminiscences of Babuji Maharaj, *by the author.*

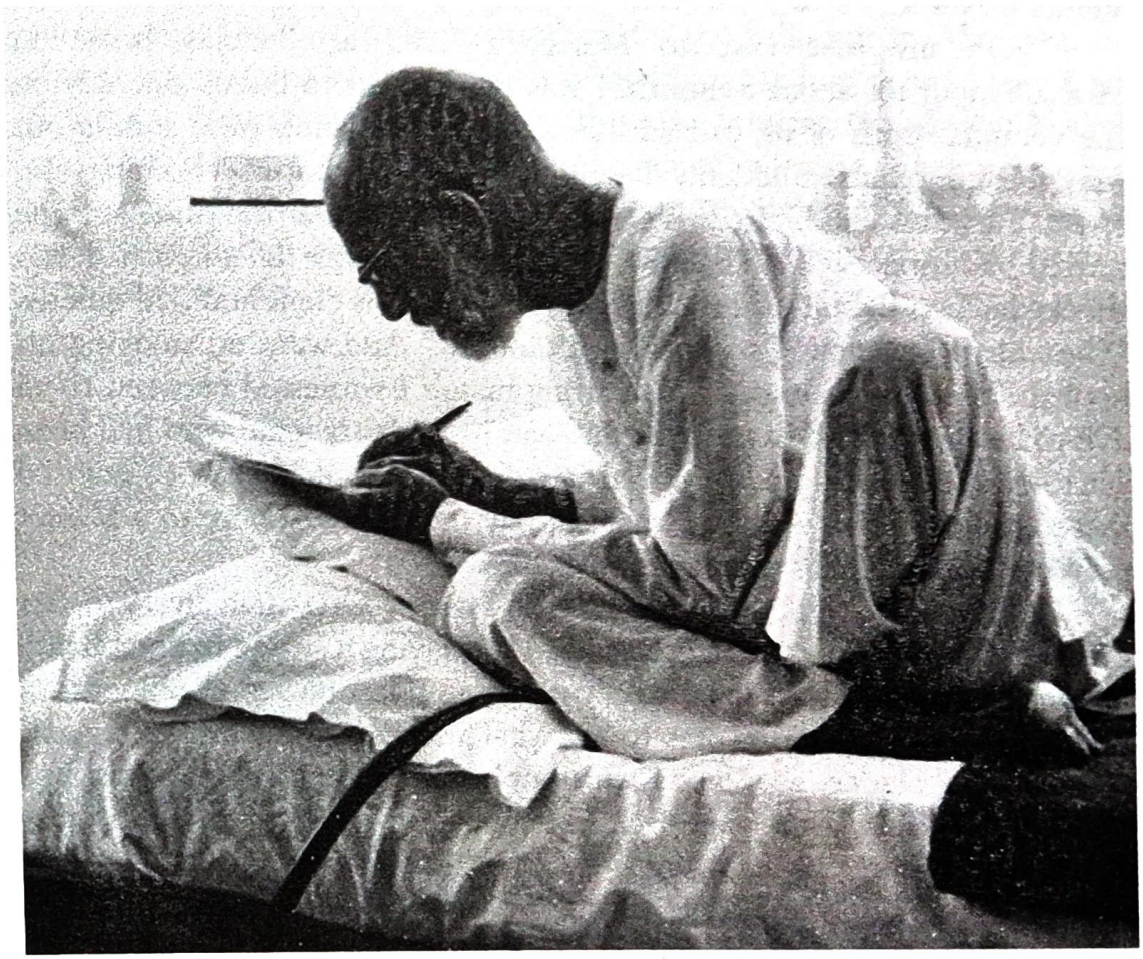
"Positivity Will Appear in Its True Nature"

JUDITH POLSTON, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

My first letter from Babuji was about a small conflict I was having in regards to this meditation and another one, which was also attracting me in some way. His reply was short, warm and wonderful, "The conflict in whatever nature it may be, we should try to remove it." And, "Either be positive first, negation will follow, or become negative, positivity will appear in its true nature." A lot to ponder.

Another reply about marriage difficulties said, "To live a happy life, we should learn co-operation and tolerance with all connected with us. Husband should be given due share and wife should receive due treatment from her husband. Every one of us should realise the Ultimate. He should perform his duty. If the husband falls short of duties, wife should not reciprocate. These are ways we should adopt with one another. Even if a man does not leave his bad habits why should the wife leave her good habits?" The last sentence of this reply was, "If there are problems they can be solved. If they are not solved they are not problems." This quote I have shared many times with other brothers and sisters.

And then about the question of changes in people's characters. His reply was, "The world of today is not the world of yesterday. The changeling [sic] character of the world is just the same. How can it be, that we may begin to change ourselves to have true character required for human life? Really we should not try to spoil the world, but to make it better day by day. If each one of us plays his part the principle Divinity and the germs of spirituality will come out themselves. If our unbalanced character is somehow removed we will find uniqueness everywhere. The meditation is necessary to bring about our own salvation. Here by salvation I mean freedom from the intensity of disturbing thoughts. Every man is



good if his behaviour takes the right course and it is the sign of the welcoming spirituality. We must take the right course of action not minding the circumstances how they work." Another line was: "Our duty is to try that the peace may reign in all humanity. If we make man peaceful even if it is for five minutes in a day it is a good achievement and we should try for it."

On my first visit to Master I lived at Babuji's home in Shahjahanpur for about a month. I was sitting next to Babuji one day on the veranda. Both of us, just sitting quiet and peaceful, were staring out into the courtyard. Suddenly he jumped up and started shouting and screaming at his maid. She was crossing the courtyard at the time, and she started shouting back at Babuji. This lasted a couple of minutes. I was shocked. Then Babuji just as quickly sat down in his chair and said quietly, "She's deaf you know, I have to speak loudly." And went on smoking his hookah. Well, no way was the shouting match I witnessed between them due to her being hard of hearing. She was just a feisty maid who had been with Babuji for years and he loved her dearly. I think they both enjoyed these little exercises. And I learnt that day that there is more to a Master than the romantic idea we may have of him.

Then there is the divine side of Master. One time in 1976, six months after I had become a preceptor, I was giving a sitting to an abhyasi. Suddenly the room seemed to be turning upside down and all sorts of visions came. I opened my eyes to see what was happening and to try and regain some balance, as it was a very unpleasant feeling. The abhyasi was sitting quietly, but every time I closed my eyes to do the work this crazy feeling and visions would start. I just prayed to Babuji, to continue the sitting and let me physically get through. This type of 'cleaning' continued for about half of the sitting and then suddenly stopped, the sitting finished in a peaceful state. The abhyasi did not report anything unusual but said it was a profound sitting and he felt some core cleaning had taken place and felt peaceful afterwards. Then about an hour later, in casual conversation, he started talking to me about a few LSD drug trips he had taken a few years previously. This is what I had experienced in the sitting and realised that Babuji had pulled it out. I wrote to Master and told him of this and his humble reply was, "You have done good work on Mr. X. In this system

cleaning is very important and this is giving good results." Then the last line, "If one takes interest in the work, the work becomes efficacious." He did all this work and gave me the credit!

About the time of Babuji's death I lived in Portland, Oregon. We knew Master was very ill. I was driving in town that day, my daughter in the back of the car. Suddenly while approaching a stoplight that was turning red, I seemed to be in an altered state. I did not see the light, nor that it was turning red, nor much of anything. It just seemed that I was floating. I went through the light at this busy intersection, down the block and a few minutes later seemed to come out of this state of being. I realised what had happened, but could not explain it. A day or two later we got news that Babuji had gone. His departure corresponded with the same time and day of this incident driving my car.

"I Am Doing My Job, You Go and Do Your Job"

RASIK K. KANJEE, PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA

In 1974 my Dad, who was looking for a guru, met a preceptor and took sittings. He came back to South Africa with *Voice Real*. I became gripped by *Voice Real* and asked my dad to allow me to sit with him for meditation in a long distance sitting, as there weren't any preceptors in South Africa.

I decided I was not interested in preceptors. I challenged Babuji mentally, "If according to your writing in *Voice Real* you are such a worthy guru–I do not want to take up sittings with a preceptor; you show me your power and I will follow you. I give you fifteen minutes to prove yourself." In ten minutes I was rolling on the floor with my shirt wet with tears. I felt strong transmission on the crown and after the sitting was over, we three abhyasis got up and I felt happy. Dad was happy that I wouldn't be lost any more, and the third abhyasi was bewildered.

There was not one vice I had not tried. After a week I smiled in my meditation and offered another challenge: "Babuji, I may leave the bad habits that I have within seven days from this time." I felt lenient towards Master. On the sixth day my vices left me.

Nine months after starting Sahaj Marg I was off to Shahjahanpur where I was convinced again of his greatness. Within fifteen minutes I started to work cleaning the beams of the ceiling where he sat and other parts of the front room. I spent lots of time talking to him mentally and he would look at me with a smile of astonishment.

When he came to South Africa he gave us all a ball of a time. Daily sittings, sometimes an atmosphere to his liking, thereafter, the fun began. I mean there was not a single day when we were not laughing with tears rolling down. I remember he told us he was short-tempered with his wife

and always landed in trouble. And how he used to have fun at school, and mentioned a few anecdotes about abhyasis' samskaras. One such story he told about an Englishman who came to see him in a wheelchair when Babuji was on his English tour. This man wanted Babuji to perform some miracle so that he could be relieved of his pain. As he persisted, Babuji took up his case and found that a tank in the war had run him over below the knee. None of the medicines could help because the samskara was hidden in just one cell. He cleaned that cell and the man was all right.

He had a tough time looking after his children, especially Umesh who was so fat that whenever he cried Babuji tried his best to pick him up, but because he was so thin and weak his own body would stretch, but the child would not lift an inch off the floor. His wife could pick the child up with one hand.

One night he got up and kept on saying his house-guard was sick and had a headache. We were in South Africa and he was seeing the guard from here. I said, "I will go and give him medicine." I came back afterwards and told him, "I've given the medicine." He was calm. A few months later I learned that the servant had headaches which got cured.

He told me a story of Mulidhar, his personal secretary, a frail, and old, slightly deaf man. Once Master needed him and called for him. After a lot of shouting, they found him sitting with doors closed, next to Babuji's room. Babuji asked him angrily why he did not reply. In a meek voice Mulidhar said, "I was meditating on your form," and everybody had a silent laugh.

Once we were sitting together for meals, Babuji, his grandson and I. He got up to wash his hands after finishing the meal. Suddenly, he came back to the doorway and started to plead as a miserable beggar. I was shocked and my eyes filled with tears. Why was Babuji asking for forgiveness? He replied he had got up from the table without permission and this was improper, as I was a guest. Instantly I said, "Have you still taken me to be your guest when I thought I was accepted as a house member?" He smiled and went away, to wash his teeth. I sat near him whilst he was washing. When he looked up and said, "I am doing my job, you go and do your job". I did not understand. But, immediately, I had a

vision of a cigarette so I understood and went out for a smoke. I did not smoke in front of him.

The day before his *mahasamadhi*, I asked one of our fellow abhyasis to accompany me to Cape Town, a city 1400 kilometres away. On the way, I got an intense feeling that Babuji was going to leave us. Next morning, brushing my teeth, a phone rang and I knew that it was the news.

Thereafter, I wasted five years until one day I told my parents I was fed up with Sahaj Marg and I was leaving the Mission. I was disgusted with the lies from the opposite camp. The very next day I got a golden opportunity to meet my present Master and I have found the path to my Homeland again.

"Come and See Me for a Few Minutes"

LALITA SREENIVASAN, CHENNAI, INDIA

Babuji came to Tinsukhia three months after we began living there. He was delayed; and we were all eagerly waiting for him. When we went into the new ashram building he was sitting on the dais. I was standing near a pillar and looking at Him, and I thought, "Oh, this is Babuji." And he looked directly into my eyes, it was such an electric feeling, it went directly to my heart. "Oh God, there, he sees me!" It was fantastic.

Gradually the feeling, the closeness to him grew. As usual it was a three-day event. Gatherings in India are usually three-day functions. We did not know anybody when we first reached there, but at the end of it all we had got to know a lot of abhyasis from different centres. I was wide-eyed, listening to all their experiences, and how they first met Babuji, and all the time there was this beautiful, charged atmosphere. I felt that that hall, far away in Tinsukhia where I had never been, was my home, and I could never even think of going out of that place. I just felt homesick if I even thought of going anywhere else.

Finally, it was the day to leave, and we got all packed up and my husband said, "Babuji doesn't even know us, and I don't know if we're going to be able to see him before we leave." And then we heard an announcement. Babuji had said, "Anyone who's leaving can come and see me for a few minutes." So there we were, you know, with thumping hearts, going down to the room, just the two of us. In Hindi, we said to Babuji, "Namaste, Babuji." And later we said, "Call us back soon." The look on his face and his smile is something that is still engraved so deeply in my heart, I'll never forget, just the thought of it lights me up, completely. Beautiful.

"No More, Not Less"

HARPAL SINGH, SHAHJAHANPUR, U.P., INDIA

Though I lived from birth in a village near Shahjahanpur, I did not hear of Babuji Maharaj until I was thirty-two years of age. It was during the period that the ashram was under construction that I came face to face with Babuji while walking on a road in Shahjahanpur. An overseas sister was accompanying him. On enquiring, I was told that he was 'Shirr Ram Chandler'. Due to curiosity I went to Babuji's house and someone there described the Mission and Master, while Babuji sat quietly smoking his hookah.

I misunderstood the whole thing and thought that this was one of those spiritual organisations who propagate spirituality of India abroad while actually not knowing true spiritual science. When I got up to go, Babuji who had been silent so far told me, "Whenever you come to Shahjahanpur from your village, you can come here also. Take it as your own home," but due to misunderstanding I lost the golden opportunity gifted by his grace. I did not realise then, that after eight years of wandering, having lost my mental and physical health that I would come back to Babuji's home.

After that first meeting with Babuji, I returned to the Indian Navy and after that to new employment in Singapore. It was there that conflict with my colleagues led to depression and I started remembering God in the form of mother, to help me. Amid my bitter mental suffering I searched books, and a book called *Highways to God*, came into my hands. Two pages described the Shri Ram Chandra Mission. Reading this, my mind recalled the look Babuji had given me eight years previously. It seemed to me that He had been following me through the years, maybe even through past lives.

So, when I came home I took introductory sittings.

I remember one day while I sat among six other abhyasis Babuji gave me an apple and told me to eat. I was shy to eat it in front of the others and I put the apple in my pocket. When I got home I cut the apple into pieces and distributed them to my family members, considering it to be a great gift of most holy prasad. I did not know then that I should have eaten the whole apple before Master. I am a bit sorry for this.

Whenever I visited Babuji, perhaps on average once a week, he used to ask my name and where I came from. Then after I had been visiting him for six months, without looking at me while he corrected his hookah, he said smiling happily, "Has Harpal Singh come?"

"Yes," I said.

"I don't remember names," he said, "but on hearing your voice I could recognise."

Once when I was busy constructing my house, I did not visit Babuji for two months and he asked my friend about me. I went to see him the next day. How careful he was about each and every one of us, however humble our status might be.

One day early in my abhyas, I was sorry I asked a question of Babuji. It was because Indian spiritual literature is so full of advice about sickness and wealth being an obstacle to progress in spirituality and I thought that this was difficult for everyone. So I asked Babuji, "What about sex?" He looked at me, I thought unhappy to hear such a question. But now the words were gone from my tongue and nothing could be done. "No more, not less," Babuji replied.

Once when I went on leave to Shahjahanpur, Babuji asked me, "Where do you take food?" I told him I ate in 'dhabas,' roadside hotels catering mostly for drivers and daily wage workers. He did not say anything, but later it came to my mind that he meant my food was not right because I used to take non-vegetarian food and alcohol.

One time when I was sitting in front of Babuji with others, he said, looking at me, "Everyone has to change according to time." I did not understand what he meant and why he said it to me.

Babuji fixed his steady gaze on me for a moment on two occasions. This made me happy and on one of these occasions I felt He did so out of his happiness of the divine work he had done on me.

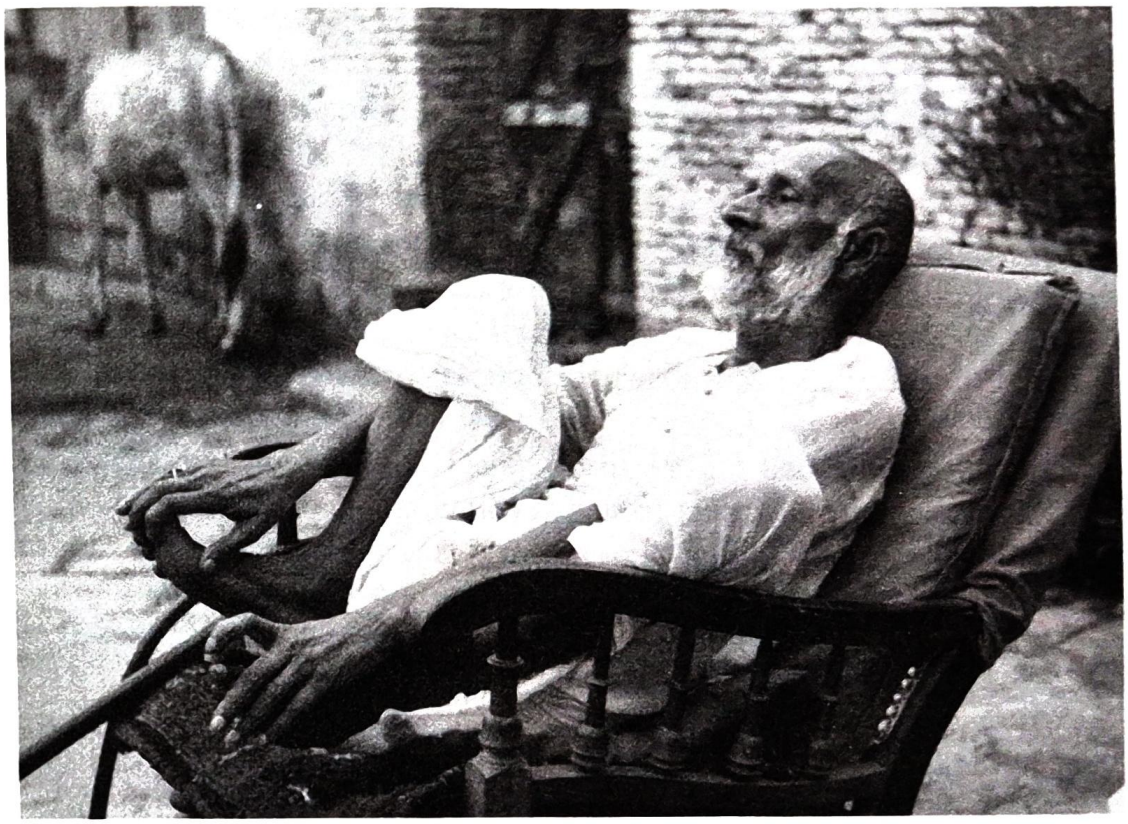
On the festival of Holi when I went to see Babuji with colours splashed on my clothes he indicated me to others saying, "More colour has come on him." This carries two meanings for me, one material and the other spiritual.

Just behind Babuji's seat in his room there was a small window. Some of us were sitting with him and some working class people residing on the land owned by Babuji could be heard shouting and using vulgar language. Addressing the woman as 'Bahu' (daughter-in-law) because he had respect for everyone he asked her, "Please pacify the man who is shouting." The woman replied something. Then Babuji smiling, told us, "Look, they drink, shout, abuse daily and enjoy this way, but I cannot tell them to move out of my land."

I brought my eldest brother who was having problems to Babuji. He told my brother, "Pray morning and evening regarding your problems." I said to my brother, "Just pray thinking that Babuji is in front of you." At this, Babuji said, "No! He should pray to one in whom he believes." He did not like to hurt the feelings of one who did not believe in him. In spite of this, he would solve people's problems.

In 1979 I served for two months in the United Arab Emirates. The life of a mechanic in the desert was very difficult and kneeling on the ground, I used to pray daily to Babuji. When I came home I went to see Babuji with my wife. As we entered the courtyard of Babuji's house, he got up from his seat to welcome us, "Come, come." Babuji said, "Shall I give you tea? You have come from very far." The people sitting with Babuji looked with surprise at us guessing that some important persons had come. I was also surprised because I had not yet realised that he meant U.A.E. by the words "so far," and he had been with me in the desert to care for me there. He helped and protected anyone whoever prayed to Him from anywhere in the globe.

Babuji's way of treating others compelled them to him so much that they wept when leaving him. Also he made people, whether philosopher or dusty labourer, feel at ease and understood by using local



Hindi, well-spoken Hindi, Urdu or English. And yet he did not need any language to convey his thoughts to anyone. I personally experienced him knowing what I tried to hide from him due to my inferiority complex, in my mind. He could perform a miracle to draw an aspiring soul to Himself no matter where that soul happened to be. Distance was never an obstacle to Him.

"Give Your Heart to God"

OLE NØRGAARD, COPENHAGAN, DENMARK

During the first fifty years of my life, I was always somewhat afraid of His light, because when Divinity visited me in my parental home towards the latter end of my teenage years, I was frightened to the core of my being. Because the first visit was very forceful, it arriving totally out of the blue, and happening for reasons that were unknown to me and my social environment of the time. It left me with a fear of death, because if the Light had stayed a tiny fraction longer of that small second it had, I would have 'evaporated'. So it felt to me.

When Babuji visited Denmark in 1972 I had already begun the beginning of a life long, karmatically guided association with my wife. As she was an abhyasi, she wanted, for reasons beyond me, to go to Babuji's house of residence in Hellerup. So we went there together on one sunny Sunday. We had no children but we were expecting a child.

For reasons which escape my memory, I, a non-abhyasi, ended up sitting in a chair at the bottom of the garden of the house where Babuji stayed in Copenhagen. I felt fine in my solitude, which ended suddenly when I became aware that an old man of un-Danish appearance and dress was sitting on the veranda of Vibe Erstad's house. He seemed preoccupied with the sole purpose of looking at me.

I remember I thought of asking him, "Why are you staring at me?" but I thought better of it and remained silent like him. As if he had a choice in the matter; there was no one else in the garden but me to look at. Instead I did what he did and there we sat the two of us staring silently at each other for quite some time. I remember thinking to myself: Why has that old man left the company of the people who came to visit him, only to look silently at me?

I do not recollect how long our mutual staring lasted, but when I told my wife about the event, she became all excited and asked, "Isn't he a lovely old and holy man?" "No," I said. "I only saw an old fellow who appeared elegant and seemed quite fine for his age." "But can't you see his wisdom?", my wife wanted to know. "No. I only saw him from a distance and he said nothing."

It took me more than twenty-five years to reach the ever-open doors of Sahaj Marg, and I think my wife gave up on me in the course of so much time, thrown as she was solely upon her Master's resources. Her only comfort was when Chariji commented several times, "He will come to Sahaj Marg." But in all those years I can truly say I went through life without seeing any lasting value, although I thought it quite rich and relevant.

It is by Babuji's grace alone that I learned to see things in their proper prospective. In that garden I had participated unknowingly in what I considered a non-event but to Him it must have been a spiritual event, along with so many others of His own making, because who can say that a Master ever does anything without a purpose? It took me a couple of months, after my own Sahaj Marg existence began in 1989 under the stewardship of Chariji, to learn that Babuji must have made me appear in that garden to suit His purposes. Don't ask me what He did, but I am convinced we had to meet like that, because otherwise I would certainly have ended my life without ever knowing what I had missed.

To meet the Master of Creation in a human form is a humbling experience, significant beyond the distance of any measurable mile. In 1972 the event of such significance passed my understanding by, although I was present in person. From my later abhyas with the present Master, I have learned that one must reduce one's own reasoning of rationality to induce His level of originality, if one wants to grow spiritually that is. And I have equally learned that the growth of reduction does not occur by itself, especially for fence sitters like I was then, because the inducement needs constant nourishment and requests attempts to grow. Simple trying is not enough, as Babuji Himself could have remarked, if one quotes Him slightly off key. I saw no holy man then, but I do see Him now. Although the human shape of our saint has changed its form, the essence of Light remains the same.

"Realisation is Death of Death"

MARTIN WORTHY, CHENNAI, INDIA

When I first met him, Babuji was sitting in his chair, catching the sun as they say. He greeted me formally, offered me a seat in front of him and just gazed into my eyes and beyond. I had a host of questions prepared but I was caught by his gaze, he appeared to be looking both in front of me and through me, his eyes were like big open doors, I couldn't see from where or at what distance he was looking at me. I thought that if I was as transparent as I felt at that moment, then I need ask no questions, he would read them himself within me. With that, I relaxed and began to feel at home. Quickly I felt more at home than I had ever done in my life. We exchanged no words; he simply proceeded to show me his condition in the most wonderful way so uncomplicated.

At that time I was a smoker and if I was an authority on anything it was smoking! Babuji sat in front of me and smoked his hookah. A mixture of tobacco and molasses smoked through a water pipe. I watched him draw in and out without any effort, without doing. I'd just come through Iran and Afghanistan; I knew what it was to smoke a hookah. I was caught watching the dance of his non-doing. He was like a duck in water; completely at ease, doing what comes naturally but at the same time totally unaffected by it. He was simply Being. Not like everyone else I had met, doing this, doing that. I used to see people by what they did, the job or function they performed, their relationship to one or another—He, on the other hand, just was. At the same time I could feel a gentle emanation of love for all coming from him. I couldn't have described it like this then, I would have only said I felt good sitting there with this unique man.

I started the practice an hour or so after arriving at the ashram. At the time I was living on a farm in India, so it was possible for me to visit

him regularly for a few days every few months. Then in 1982, I came to Europe to be with him in Paris as well as attend to some material affairs. I returned to India at the end of March 1983.

He had been sick all winter from the very moment he had left us in Paris the year before. We had been kept up to date via letters. So arriving at Palam airport, New Delhi, the first thing I wanted to do was to visit my dear, suffering Master. I got the details from a preceptor and set off to catch this number bus, get out when I saw such and such a landmark, walk until this traffic light, turn left and walk so far, etc.; it went easily. At a point in the journey I began to feel a change in the atmosphere. I could feel Shahjahanpur, the courtyard, it was the same feeling of serene splendour, a total contradiction to the scenes around me. Street sellers, dirt, noise, kids playing ball. It was hot and dry. I walked on and followed the plan, until the feeling grew so strong that I simply followed the magnet of my heart. The Mission emblems on the men at the gate told me that I had found the Helvetica Clinic and Babuji's residence.

He lay on a bed, curled up like a baby, a feeding tube in his nose, his beautiful eyes open, breathing without breathing, looking without looking, just like always. Here was the source of that serene atmosphere, here was the active force in all things, yet at that moment so terribly inactive. His eyes were unmoving, his mouth too, it was just the gentle ripple of the ribcage that told of his physical aliveness; the transmission told us of his true state of being. We bathed in it, sat down on the terrace and swam in Divine consciousness, trying hard to let go of the stark reality of his medical condition, for though it appeared as though he was in no discomfort, still he was so obviously sick and weak beyond imagination, it defied our comprehension. But here we were, at the feet of our Master, Master of the universe, in a state of such unfathomable spaciousness. We wanted every minute to last a century. After a couple of days I had to go back to Punjab and sort out things like the buying of seed, taking over the land and sorting out my tractor. Reluctantly I left him there and sped off to my doings.

Ten days later I returned to Delhi. It was early in the day when I caught the bus to see my beloved Babuji. I was relieved to be free for a few days, to sit with him was all I wished, that and that he would be well and

that soon he would be walking again. As I came close I could feel the absence of transmission well before I could see the Clinic. It puzzled me, "Maybe he is not so well as before," I pondered, my pace hurried. As the clinic came into view, the absence of the brother abhyasis was stark—"Have they moved him and I haven't been told? Why should they tell me?" I thought.

I peeked through the window into an empty room and then went in and asked an attending Sister, "Could you tell me where I may find Shri Ram Chandra? He used to be in the front room..." She cut in abruptly, "Oh, you don't know? He died a couple of days ago. I think he's been cremated already...just wait a minute, I'll ask." I was speechless.

"Yes, his family have taken his body back to Shahjahanpur and his cremation was yesterday..." I left without saying a word, walked out of the clinic and along some streets till I came to a bus stop and sat down. "He's done it, he's left me here all alone," was my only thought, I was devastated. Marooned on a planet, in a world where he was my only reference point, I could not believe it. I sat there for an hour watching the people and the buses go by. I had nowhere to go, nothing to do, I was in shock. More than anything else I remember feeling the absence of the transmission, the sameness of Delhi street life and the noisy, materialistically wild atmosphere. Before, I'd had a refuge, a man who created his own serene or divine atmosphere wherever he went. He was gone and so was his atmosphere.

My joy for his freedom took a while to coalesce, but finally it did. How he survived for so long, in his frail frame, should have been the question on our lips if we want to explore the goal of spiritual life. He was equanimity personified, equally at ease with anyone, talking or joking on any topic, but always with an oblique reference to spirituality. He was focused on the essential and when confronted by a material or practical question beyond his knowledge he could go into meditation and have the answer revealed. He saw no race, no sex, no caste, and no class. He took no money except that offered as donation from a sincere heart; he used to say, "You cannot buy spirituality." He spoke ill of no man and saw always the positive in all things. He was a perfect human being.

"This and That Have Gone Now"

C. SANSKARA SASTRI, KAVALI, INDIA

It was you who tempted
Me ever to test me.

It was you who blinded me
With material success
It was you who blurred my vision
And blunted my senses.

It was I like a fool considered me all-powerful!
It was I ran farther and farther from you.
It was I in my thirst and lust that
Could not recognise your presence

You smiled and smiled and helped me on and on
With success after success.
Hoping fondly sometime at least
I recognise Your Hand in it.

I ran and ran into wilderness,
Into alien habitat, where everyone was hostile!
At last I realised how small I was
And tried to visualise You.

But alas! Where are you?
Where? Where? I searched and searched
When I was guided to you
By my Master's Grace.

I saw you at last covered and covered
Cocooned strongly inside my own heart.
Oh, I want you. I pray to you. I beseech you.
Break all the bonds.

Shatter all the cocoons and show me that
Infinite speck of my own existence.
Oh, help me my Master, representing the Infinite.
Burn all my misdeeds and purify me.

Oh! Let me undo all I have done.
Let me turn back all the way to You.
From the Finite
To the Infinite.

Heard melodies are sweet,
You sing melodies sweeter
I implore you my friend
To lead me to that place.

Where time has no limits
Where no melodies are heard
Where I have no existence
But as part of you.

I don't know your heart, my unknown friend,
But from past tidings,
I am sure it is more hospitable
Than the present existence.

"A Nerve Was Cut"

SHAMRAO B. KULKARNI, KOLNAPUR, INDIA

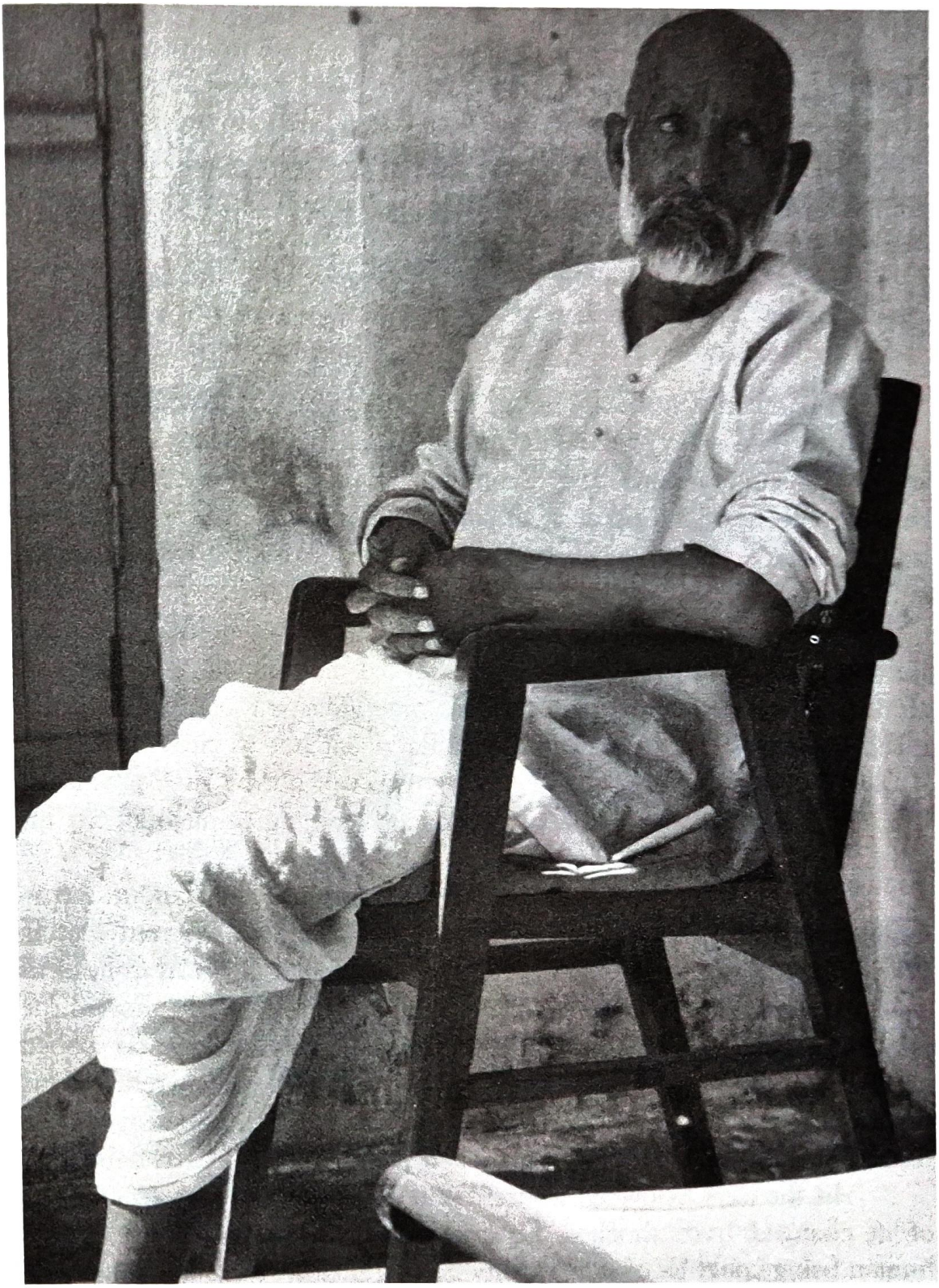
In 1960 I was just 15 years old, a student in tenth standard when I met Babuji. In October of that year I suffered typhoid fever. I was treated by a local doctor in a small town in Gulbarga district in Karnataka. Maybe due to strong medicines given by the doctor, my eyes were affected, so that I lost the vision in my left eye. The various treatments didn't prove of use and my sight didn't show any signs of improvement. It seemed 'human' to be helpless and then came 'Divine' in action.

One of my schoolteachers, Shri Bhimsen Rooji of Bhutpur, not less than my father to me, who was an abhyasi of SRCM, took me to Sedam in Karnataka, a nearby place, where Rev. Babuji was to visit. My teacher told Babuji that I could only use my right eye and that I was blind in my left eye. Babuji asked my teacher to take me to Bhutpur to see him where the next visit was scheduled. We all travelled for an hour in a bullock-cart, with Babuji nearly about fifteen kilometres away.

We were sitting in my teacher's house in front of Babuji's chair. He looked at me, suddenly got up, took me outside the room, into the sunlight and looked into my eyes. He massaged my left eyelid two or three times with his gentle fingers and gently patted on my left temple, came back to his chair and said, "A nerve was cut which I rectified now. Let him take some medicine he will be all right." After five months I appeared for my 10th standard exams and could score a seal for mechanical engineering.

Now I cannot judge which eye of mine is lucky; the right one which could see Him for the first time or the left which was treated by Him in such a way that now at the age of fifty-three, the sight of my left eye is clearer than that of the other. Or it is I who was lucky enough to have had such a unique first exposure.

How can I hold back my tears even now when I remember this?



"Fully 'Being', You Will Not be Tired Anymore"

BRIGITTE SMITH, MUNICH, GERMANY

To tell about Babuji so as to bring Him to a reader's heart is impossible. The main part of any meeting with Him resounds deep within one's soul and follows the inner landscape like a golden essence throughout one's life; just a small part, a reflection of the 'real' is maybe told. Existence was felt as a jewel in His presence as time was suspended and the purpose and the goal of life became crystalline clear.

My first encounter with Babuji was in a dream six weeks after starting meditation in October 1976. He told me I should meet Him six months later in Shahjahanpur. At that time life was tough for me and I asked Him, "Master, what can I do, that I am not so tired anymore?" "When you one day can be fully 'being' you will not be tired anymore." This sentence has been a measuring rod for learning throughout my life time.

In February 1977 I went for the first time to Shahjahanpur. Arriving in a small group at night we stood in the opening of the yard waiting for a torch to be brought into the black of this Indian night. In front of us were a few silhouettes where only the light of the white dress showed the number of people. In this span of time my whole being shook and sobbed experiencing holiness for the first time and I wanted to fall down before his silhouette—a timeless life span, unforgettable. And then a man with a torch came and of course this one particular silhouette had been Babuji.

In the days following, we were only five with him and my concept of life changed. I was shocked. I had not ever hoped, ever dreamt, that a human being could be of such quality beyond quality. a human being as a true 'Being.' Once as a small child in refugee camps I had made a basic

decision: 'I will survive. I will not permit anybody to destroy me.' Now, I decided: 'I will follow this Being. Nobody will ever be permitted to hinder me.' Without many others around Babuji, I had the chance to talk with him freely and especially since, as green and blind as I was, he had made me a preceptor. But most of it is absorbed into the most inner golden chamber of my soul from which no utterance can come forth.

When I was ordered to give my first sitting, I asked Babuji, "But what shall I do?" He just answered, "Be alert." There I was, in obedience closing my eyes, saying, "Please start," to experience then the wonder of this holy flow, using me as a conduit, to which finished after exactly thirty minutes. These words "be alert" became another measuring rod for learning.

During another visit to Shahjahanpur in 1979, it so happened that the group of overseas abhyasis decided to make a two day visit to Sister Kasturi in Lucknow. Only I and another abhyasi from Holland could not tear ourselves away from Babuji's feet. We had two absolutely heavenly days. On the first day, looking around, Babuji asked Gunde Rao, "Where have they gone?" When he heard the answer, he shook his head and said, "Why do they go to the faucet, if they can be at the well?" It is impossible to explain the event of such a holy Being entering my soul space and my life, year by year.

When in April 1983 we learned of Babuji's *mahasamadhi*, instead of exploding in mourning and despair, many of us were given the deep experience of a 'Pentecost' of the Holy Spirit, now free of the body entering His disciples' souls and showing the reality of the eternal continuance of life and especially of His Life which we could increasingly and later experience in Chariji's presence, guiding us onwards.

Two poems written April 21st 1983 after hearing of His departure from His body.

My Master
Thou hast made me see the truth,
    jewels on the path,
Thou hast made me weep in love,
    flowers, stars above,
Thou hast given strength and aim
    tenderness to love, not blame,
Thou hast but transformed the me —
want to work, to be for Thee
want to melt into Thee all,
Master, sweet beloved Soul.

My Master
Each atom became a tear
Thou made them bloom.
Oh, these millions of flowers
bursted my heart.

Master,
Thou art Thee
in all
and all in Thee.

"But You are Not in Your Room Now"

CHINU SREENIVASAN, CHENNAI, INDIA

I want to narrate something about Babuji's concern for nothing being wasted. This happened while there were some abhyasis visiting him at the ashram. They were sitting outside in the courtyard in front of his little room, and there were some abhyasis who were staying in a building to the side. On the ground floor, there was an abhyasi who had gone to his room to put the lights on and came back. Babuji waited for a few minutes before asking him, "Why did you go to the room?" "Babuji, I wanted to put on the light," he said. "But you're not in your room now. You are here," Babuji said "Yes," he said. "Please go back and put the light off," Babuji said.

This really should be viewed in the light that there is a lot of superstitious weight given in India to switching the lights on in the evening being a good omen. So this is how Babuji told the abhyasi that there was no value to this particular belief. We should not waste what we are not using. I have always remembered that, because at any time we see so much waste.

The first time I saw Babuji was at the Tinsukhia ashram inauguration in 1977. I was waiting in his room for him to do something and he knew that we were waiting for something to happen. "I want to see the garden," he said, so we all got up and I gave him his slippers and he said, "Don't waste your time on that." I was thinking later on about what he could have meant and I decided that I was thinking I was doing a personal, physical service for Him and prepared to feel elated about that. But he at once could read my mind and told me not to limit myself to the physical aspect of service to the Master.

"You are on the Right Path"

ANNIE JEHLEN, VALBONNE, FRANCE

The room was full of people the first time I saw our beloved Babuji. As he entered I was filled with compassion for this old man who seemed so weak and yet had journeyed so many miles to meet us. He sat down and gave us a sitting. At the end of the meditation I was shocked to see that people had started talking, coming and going without Babuji. Feeling saddened by this I suddenly saw that Babuji was looking in my direction and nodded a greeting to him. He indicated that I should come and sit beside him. I felt very small, and tried to catch a glance from him. He didn't speak, just smiled, looking at the assembly. During my time beside him I experienced what could only be described as a moment of eternity illustrating the deference due Babuji. In this first meeting Beloved Babuji captured my heart forever.

In October 1980, I went to Babuji's home. In spite of the fact that it was already dark He came through the courtyard to greet us. Introduced to him by a French preceptor I repeated a phrase that I had learned, "I'm sorry my English is very little." He smiled, seemed amused, and arranged for us to be driven in His car to the ashram.

One day, sitting beside him I asked, "How can I develop the love that I feel in your presence?" "With the practise, love develops automatically," intercepted a preceptor. Faced with such a logical answer my question seemed stupid. Not to dear Babuji who said, "That is a very good question. Continue, you are on the right track." He then asked me my name and my profession. When I told him I was an auxiliary nurse, he nodded approval and said that professions involving care of others were very good for the spiritual path. I learned later that he had told someone beside him, "this woman has a pure heart."

My last meeting with Babuji was in Paris 1982. His eyes still shone with an indescribable light although I had the feeling that I was seeing Him for the last time. Yet again I was deeply moved that this frail old man, who was obviously in pain, had undertaken such a long journey. His love for us knew no limits. As I sat in satsangh it came to me that I was to ask for a sitting from the preceptor who had accompanied Babuji. This preceptor was Chariji.

Babuji's Divine Presence lives on through Chariji. Some time after Babuji's departure I was going through a very difficult period. I seemed to be at an impasse with no feelings and so I decided to attend a seminar in Augerans. At the end of a satsangh given by Chariji I looked up and with wonder saw Babuji sitting beside Chariji. The image stayed for some time during which I could feel my heart expanding and swelling with love. This experience was so overwhelming that I burst into tears. I felt this Presence so dear to my heart, this fragment of His Immense Love. That was the end of my impasse.

At the Golden Jubilee in Manapakkam four or five of us had gathered around Sister Kasturi. While she was busy we all sat down in front of her empty chair. Suddenly I was plunged into deep meditation. I was aware that Babuji was now sitting in Sister Kasturi's chair. I was so totally overwhelmed and grateful that I burst into tears. Finally Sister Kasturi went to the exit and we followed her. A French abhyasi told her that I had known Babuji personally. Sister Kasturi smiled and said, "That's you, you have been touched," and went away.

"The Saints Come to Help"

M.C. ANAWALT-LE COUR

In the 1970's Babuji visited London, England. I am told that he was appalled by what he perceived of raw humanity, the lack of spirituality in that place. But regardless of his shock at what could be described as a cesspool of metropolitan human misery, Babuji nonetheless proceeded to broadcast his transmission of love to all souls in the London region.

I was part of that, for I was living in the London area in the 1970's. Though I did not have the privilege of meeting Babuji in person, I feel that I began to receive Babuji's Divine transmission at this time. I was in desperate need of Babuji's help, for though materially cared for, I was faced with problems of enormous grief and illness, that were life threatening. My will to live was slight. I did not know how to live. I could not reach out to anyone for help. I was chilled with grief, stiffened with fears. Rake thin, I was medically declared to be near death. Thus it was that Babuji's transmission reached me in London, at a time when everything in my life caused me to feel totally empty.

I felt so very empty inside of myself. Life seemed to be slipping away from me. I began to let go of living. Nothing seemed to matter to me any more. I felt so all alone. Strangely, my extreme feeling of personal emptiness must have been my spiritual turn-key, because into the gnawing sense of darkened emptiness dawned a light which brought with it the promise of spirituality out of the blue. Something began to happen to me. From deep within myself, I began to feel a kind of Presence, which comforted me. Once in a while, I would hear a voice calling me. At times, in empty rooms, I would perceive someone with me.

This someone remained invisible to me. But, my will to live and to become spiritualised gradually increased. I felt a great need to search and

to read spirituality inspired writings. I read and inquired, wherever possible, about how to meditate. I began to experience the awakening of a personal sense of inner guidance. I began to feel a sense of hope. Although unaware, I was being lovingly healed of grief and sickness. It took fifteen years, from the initial onset of my abject personal emptiness, for Babuji's Transmission and preparation to lead me to the Sahaj Marg Meditation in 1986.

I feel that it was Babuji who found me in London, who patiently guided me, who carefully cleansed me, who skilfully taught me, who quietly prepared me so that I could accept spirituality and thus would be able to sit at Chariji's feet and be spiritually restored. It was Babuji. It was the Master. It was he of such immense compassion who healed that wreck, who was then me, with his transmission of divine love.

Lids of My Eyes

O Master!
Please!
Let me hide You
Let me Hide You here
Let me hide You here within me.
Let me hide You within the lids of my eyes.
Let me hide You here within me.
Let me hide You here.
Let me hide You,
So that I may see no other.

The Master's Heart

Dear One,
Quiet yourself and close your eyes,
Calmly sensitise yourself and visualise,
That the Master's heart is before you,
Between you and whatever you may perceive,
So that everything now comes to you through the Master's heart,
And the Master's heart thus becomes all that you sense as reality.

When times of trouble or happiness happen,
Visualise the Master's heart
Put the Master's heart in front of you
between you and whatever you may see,
So you are enabled to realise that the Master's heart
Governs both your reactions and your personality.

When pain or pleasure present themselves,
Visualise the Master's heart.
Put the Master's heart in front of you,
Between you and whatever you may feel
So that what you sense, as either hurt or joy,
Filters through the Master's heart, the cleansing holy weir.

When greed and avarice arrive to tempt you,
Visualise the Master's heart,
Put the Master's heart in front of you,
Between you and whatever you may clamour to possess,
So that you may discover, you don't need more and more,
All you need is less and less, all you need is here and hear.

When objects of ugliness or beauty batter and assail your senses,
Visualise the Master's heart.
Put the Master's heart in front of you,
Between you and whatever you have become aware,
So that, whether it be a person, place or thing,
You allow the Master's heart to mitigate your samskaric scene.

Dear one,
Quiet yourself and close your eyes,
Calmly sensitise yourself and realise,
That the Master's heart is always before you,
Between you and whatever you may perceive,
So that you can let the Master's holy heart fashion your personal reality
Into a consciousness of divinity—silent, sun-filled, sacred, sanctified, serene.

A Prayer

O Master,
Thou, who knowest all.
Thou, who givest all,
Thou, who lovest all,
Thou, who art all in all,
Be thou with me,
In my heart, my soul, and my mind.
As I go forth today,
Into my daily duties,
Be thou with me,
In such manner as to guide me,
So that my thoughts outline your beauty,
So that my consciousness is of thee, only.
Make me thy instrument.
Cause me to do thy work.
Make me, in all ways, aware of thee.
Let me be ever thine.

"Love is the Inner Wakening to Reality"

HAROLD ARMSTRONG, AUGERANS, FRANCE

When I was twenty-eight, I went to India to look for something, as I felt there was a lack in my life. Several Indian gentlemen dressed in variously coloured robes promised me salvation if I followed them. I left three months later, not very impressed and with a lack deeper than ever, and I began meditating without a guide and without knowing what I was doing.

An elderly Indian man, usually sitting cross-legged, began appearing to me over the next three or four years, until I went to a spiritual community where this stopped. Eight years later, my wife, Barbara, told me about Sahaj Marg and showed me the book, *My Master*. I saw immediately that the man in my meditations had been Babuji, and I began following this path.

I met Chariji three years later, and several years after that was blessed with an illness which lasted five months at its worst, at the peak of which Babuji reappeared to me in a dream in a beautiful stone-walled garden in some European country. Leaning towards me, he said, "You know, Harold, the strength of the tiger comes from the naturally cultivated garden." This made no sense to me, but the feeling of love was extraordinary, and I began my recovery after that.

Chariji often appears to me in dreams, but I was amazed recently when he and Babuji both appeared together. Again, the feeling of love was incredible. The settings of the dreams have always been quite ordinary, with just a touch of "Oh, oh, it's the Master again," about the colours and the quality.

In the most recent dream, I was sitting with a lap-top drafting board on my knees in an Egypt-Arizona type landscape, when along came

Babuji and asked me to draw the first quarter height of the base of a pyramid in coloured lines three millimetres apart, graduating upwards in see-through 3D. The result was quite attractive, and he said, "Yes, that is very good," and carried on in the direction He had been going.

In dreams with Chariji, I forget instantly what he said but feel the enlightening effects anywhere from a few weeks to months later, whereas with Babuji, I know straight away what He said. Dreams of him seem akin to the field being ploughed; those of Chariji to the ploughed field being sown, to be harvested later.

I mention these dreams because they are my encounters with Babuji, and I am told that one cannot dream up the Master; rather he comes when one is open. This puzzles and delights me, as I feel I don't warrant the attention of the Master, so I am encouraged to carry on as I must be doing okay one way or the other. I write this story in case there are those who feel the Master hasn't time for you. If he has a few seconds for me, he must have an eternity for you.

"You Also are Beautiful"

GENEVIEVE ROY, VENCE, FRANCE

I was introduced to the Mission in 1988. The following two incidents gave me a direct experience of Babuji. 1983, a year after His *mahasamadhi* was a time in my life when events (ill-health, professional and family breakdown) were converging to give me a new perspective. Lying in bed, extremely weak, I fought all feelings of distress. On the contrary, I felt certain that there were many women whose fate was much worse than mine. This outlook helped me, and I remained calm.

Such was my condition on my first meeting with Babuji, or more correctly, with his light, as I did not see his physical body. I was lying quietly half-asleep when suddenly I was filled with a great plenitude. I had the impression of being plunged into a lightless state; there was no visible light, and yet I was extremely conscious of a star shining, glowing from inside, bathing me in its light and flooding my consciousness. "You will know great joy," seemed to be the message. I stayed completely still in inexplicable happiness. The memory of the star stayed with me for a long time, feeding me the knowledge that one day I would find my path.

Then, shortly after my introduction to Sahaj Marg, I had a dream which I associate with my first experience of light, as I experienced the same quality of presence, that of our beloved master, Babuji Maharaj. In my dream, I was looking for a new house and noticed an apartment building under construction. I decided to visit the apartments. I pushed open the door and found myself in a room where a table had been set for many guests who seemed to be expected at any moment. Continuing my visit, I entered what seemed to be a winter garden. A big table was also set there. I then entered a large room which seemed to be the children's room. Suddenly, I found myself in a very narrow space. The walls were curved

and my head touched the ceiling. It was a sort of corridor which led me to a room where an older woman awaited me. I went towards the woman to discover that it was my mother. I continued my visit, seeing many doors but not opening them, as I supposed them to be just workrooms. At last I came to the last door. I pushed it open and found myself back at the entrance to the apartment. Babuji was standing there, facing me. He smiled and said, "See here now, you also are beautiful." I remember his smile and the confidence he gave me, the sure feeling that one day I could achieve this inner light, this absolute beauty that springs from the depths of the Self and where I would discover my Self as a reflection of my Master.

"Bring Your Mother"

VICTORIA ZUPA, NEW YORK, USA

I had been meditating for about one month when I was told Chariji was coming to town. A few days later after morning meditation, the spirit of an old man with a beard appeared to me and said, "Bring your mother to the gathering."

I said, "No, I want to go alone." He appeared before me every morning and told me to bring my mother to the gathering until I called my mother and asked her to come. I was trying to convince her to go, but she kept saying no. The spirit appeared every day and told me to try again to get her to go. He did not go away until she agreed to go.

At the gathering, I saw Babuji's picture for the first time and I realised that it was Babuji who had come to me. I am happy that He pushed me to get my mother to go. Our relationship has grown into what I always knew it could be, and always prayed for it to be when I was a child. It has not been easy. It has taken a lot of work from both of us. It has changed our lives for good.

I had been meditating for two months when I went to my first gathering with Chariji in Washington. I still had mixed thoughts: I have Jesus and God, why did I need a Master? These thoughts went around and around like a broken record in my mind until during one group sitting my mind continued to play the same words and Lalaji's spirit came behind me and I felt like I was bolted to the chair and could not move. Then Babuji's spirit appeared before me and transmitted directly into my heart. From that moment my mind was stilled and I came to understand the significance of a spiritual master in my life.

I have used the word spirit, for it was Babuji in his spirit form that appeared and spoke to me, always when I was awake.

"We Go Towards Infinity"

IRENE BRINGUIER, MONTPELLIER, FRANCE

I dreamt that there were many of us in the American Bar. It was like a discotheque. I discreetly moved to another area and found myself at the bottom of a wooden staircase. Everybody fainted. I saw Babuji standing at the top of the stairs. As He began to come down, I started to go up. Halfway up, we met and stopped, shoulder to shoulder. On the left was a wall with a window. I asked Him from my heart, "Where do we go now?" He answered, "We go towards infinity." I continued up the stairs while He went on down. At the top, there was a corridor with three doors. I opened the third one; there was nothing there.

In 1994, we were preparing for our first celebration of Chariji's birthday in Montpellier. As I entered the ashram, a brother said, "Look, Irene, the reception area is like an American Bar." The ashram was built from an old discotheque. There was even a wooden staircase going up to the meditation hall with a window in the wall, as in the dream.

When I was a little girl, my grandfather and I loved each other very much, so his sudden death left me in a lot of profound pain. And so it was that the heart of a child fell asleep in the remembrance of an old man.

Somewhere between the ages of twenty and twenty-four, I had a dream that I was in my grandfather's stable. I had arrived on foot. Inside the stable, the floor was solid and firm, and I could feel the security through my feet. This was *sat.* The wall was solid with a mirror reflecting a face like my grandfather's, but I didn't recognise it. However, it was my grandfather, but which one? This was *raj.* The roof, well there was none. It was open to the sky. This was *tam.*

Looking at the face in the mirror, I realised that I would have to move to another part of the stable, where there were three boxes. The

floor was dangerous and I had to take care where I walked. The being in the mirror guided me so that I walked as carefully as a cat. The roof was still open to the sky. I looked into each of the three boxes, which were coloured white, red, and black; spirit, heart, navel. Then a family member interrupted and said that grandfather had travelled to Persia! Later, the idea that he was in contact with a Sufi came to mind, who knows?

I later learnt that Lalaji had contact with a Sufi who became a friend. Babuji talks about Lalaji's affection as that of a grandfather, and he sometimes called God grandfather, thus like a child who drinks water from the spring, my heart says, "Yes, it was my grandfather. It was my grand father." It was my grandfather and there was only one, always in the light of Master's heart.

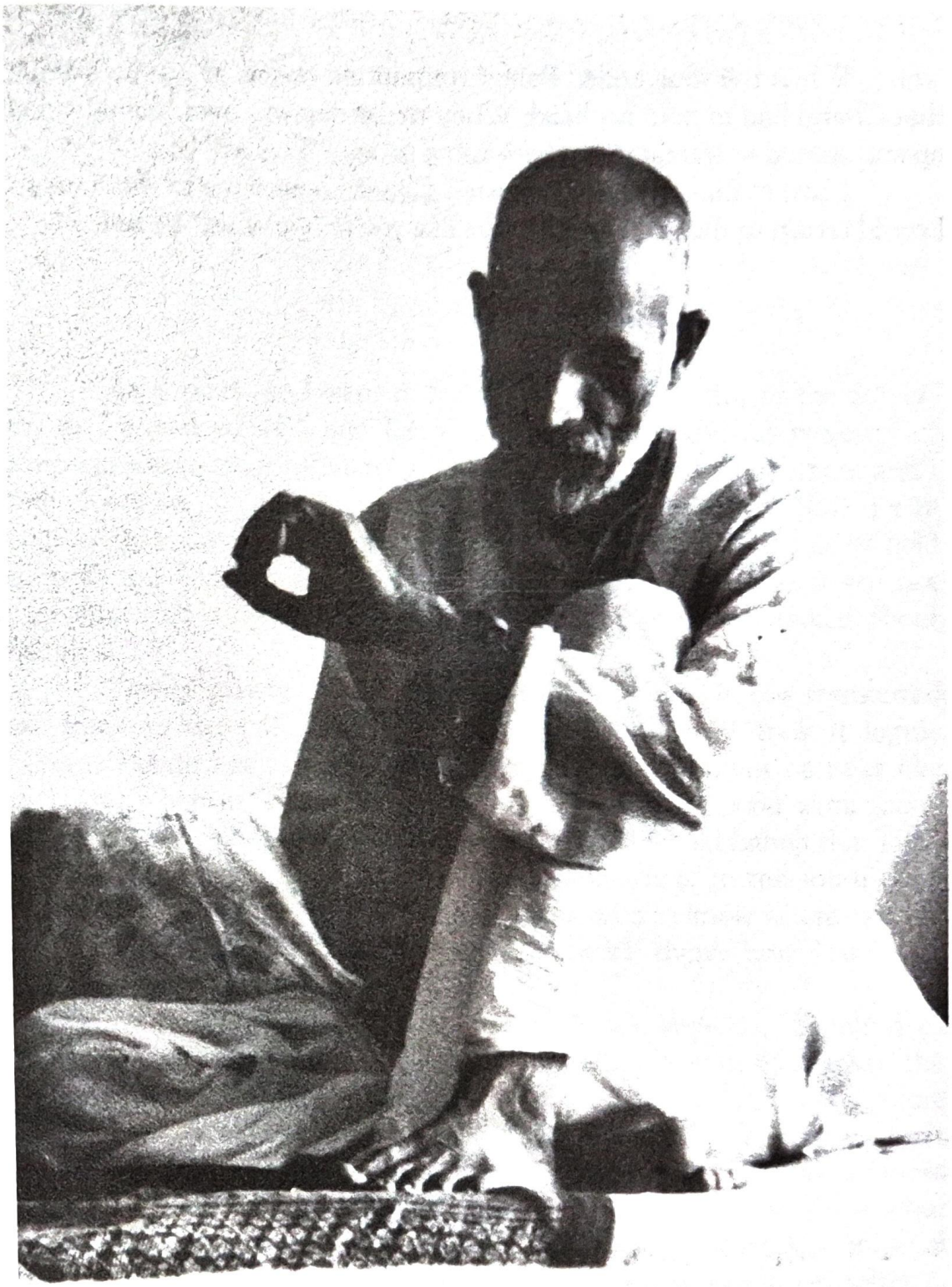
"This Will be All"

JOAN J. DREWES, NEW YORK, USA

I became a member of Shri Ram Chandra Mission in 1976 but I did not meet Babuji Maharaj. In 1985, I was lucky enough to meet Chariji who was visiting the New Jersey centre. I was then working on a musical composition which I was setting to the words:

I become you; you become me.
I become body; you become soul,
so that none can say after this that I and you are different.

After His *mahasamadhi*, Lalaji had said this to Babuji. It is just a simple tune which I sang for myself as a way of keeping me in constant remembrance. I had not officially finished it, but worked on it and sang it daily. On the night of June 12, 1985, I had this dream: I was at a large gathering in a private house. The rooms downstairs were filled to capacity with people. I was instructed by a person in a white robe to go upstairs. There were many levels, and it appears that there were guards at each level. Each time, I was instructed to go up further. When I reached the top there was a set of white double doors, which I entered. This appeared to be an ante-room, where Chariji was sitting waiting for me. Then, another set of doors opened into the main room, and Babuji was standing there. On seeing Him, I walked forward and knelt down in front of him. I cupped my hands and held them out in front of me. "There is nothing there," I said. Babuji answered, "When you say something after 'there is nothing there', then you are ready." So I say, "It feels like water." Babuji sat down with me and said to Chariji, "She is a singer." Chariji and I sing the song I had been working on, including an ending which I had not yet composed.



When the song ended Babuji transmitted to me. It was so intense that Chariji had to hold my head. When the sitting was over, Babuji stood up and started to retreat into a back room saying, "This will be all."

I bow to him, saying, "Namaste." Chariji showed me to the stairs so I could return to the gathering. "Looks like you're one of us," he said.

"Look at My Master, Lalaji"

HARNAM SINGH, NEW DELHI, INDIA

Many years ago I went to South India for a meeting at the university in Tirupati where I met Dr. K.C. Varadachari. He was professor of philosophy and comparative religion and chairman of his department and I was chairman of the department of political sciences in New Delhi University; so our common meeting ground was education and in that field we both taught Plato and Aristotle. We were also abhyasis, so it was not surprising that after we discussed Plato and Aristotle we talked about Babuji.

"Babuji told me," said Dr. Varadachari, "that He has transferred me from Sinkiang in Russia to Afghanistan. At first I took it lightly because Babuji has a good sense of humour and sometimes he talks like that. But when he said seriously that, 'You have done good work there, now you work in Afghanistan,' I was very surprised. I told Babuji that I had heard of Sinkiang, I knew it was in Russia somewhere in the south but I would have to look in the atlas for quite some time to know where exactly, ' ... and you say that I have done good work there, now I work in Afghanistan. I don't understand all this'."

Then Varadachari told me what it all implied. "Babuji does Nature's work. Sometimes He does it Himself, sometimes He takes the work from others," Varadachari said. "When I was sleeping I was working in Sinkiang. Whatever may be behind the nature of the work, I don't know. When I wake, I totally forget. I don't know anything. Master knows that I am working, and whether I am working well or not. Now what would be the nature of such work, only Babuji knows. It must be spiritual since it deals with the affairs of human beings; it could be political,

economic, or social, anything. It could be destructive. It may deal with peace, it may deal with war, whatever it is."

So that is how Babuji worked. I was able to talk to him about this and he told me, "I receive orders from above. Sometimes the orders come in the form 'Do it.' Then I have to do it. It's my responsibility. Then the orders may come 'It should be done.' In that case, I delegate this work to others. I take work from the minds of other people."

Who these people are and at what level of spirituality they are, only Babuji knows. Anyway, this is how Babuji works. So what happens is that we live in two worlds—the outside world of consciousness, the inner world of unconsciousness. The unconscious world is as big as this conscious world, but the nature of space and time is different. It has laws of operation as real as our conscious world has. The computer by which we experience life, in the mind, is the same. It works in the same way, but the only difference is that the channels which feed this computer are from this world, or the channels which feed the computer may be from the other world. The machine is the same, the effect of that feeding is the same. As the conscious world has real laws, the unconscious world has real laws. But the nature of law may differ.

Now, since there is a so-called iron curtain between these worlds, we don't know much about this other one. The impact on the mind in this world is very pronounced. But there is some overflow which we see in dreams. We see some glimpse of that world, or something escapes, so that we know something from dreams, a little disjointed, patches here and there. What it implies is that we live in both worlds. Since we live in both worlds, that world also influences this world. Actually, for the lives living in that world, it is very important, because all information is stored in that world, our samskaras, our knowledge, our culture, everything is in that world, and that influences our life here. It influences our sense of right and wrong, of good and bad, all these things in our conscious world.

Modern science knows very little about it, Babuji knows everything about it. That was the field He worked in most as far as we were concerned. The removal of difficulties, our complexities, our samskaras, they are all in that world, not in this conscious world because in this conscious world, we live moment to moment in the present.

So that is how Babuji used to work. He said once that He was asked to go to a place called Ayodhya, where Lord Rama was born because there were some problems there that had to be solved. At that time, cholera was raging there. Hundreds of people were dying every day, so he asked Lalaji, "Now, what do I do?" Lalaji said, "Yes, I asked you to go, you go." When Babuji went, he stayed at an inn which was empty because those who had not died had gone away. He stayed there for three days. "Cholera was wiped out for three days; not a single man died in those three days. When I left that city, it came again, the same way, with full force," Babuji said, "Look at my Master, Lalaji."

That is how Babuji operated. There are so many other occasions that it is difficult to recall. We became so used to these things that we did not think of remembering. It was a daily part of life. Is there anything to remember? What is there? And we come from that culture and background, where these things are considered very common. I sometimes think, "I wish I had asked this, or that." When he talked about Christ, I felt I wish I could have asked that.

In the second volume of Babuji's autobiography, you would notice that He was communicating with saints, Lord Krishna, Buddha, etc. I remember once I was with Babuji at nine o'clock in the morning and somehow talk came round to Vivekananda. He said, "Vivekananda is a great saint, but he is very tough." That finished our conversation. Then around lunch time, talk again started about Vivekananda and Babuji said, "He takes a lot of work from me." Then somehow we started talking about something else. At four o'clock, we again started talking about Vivekananda. Babuji said, "He is very tough. He says, 'My work must be first, do other's work later, I want my work immediately'." And Babuji said, "When I ask him to do my work there, he delays." I was in the middle of a sentence when he raised his hand for me to stop immediately. Then He closed his eyes. After about a minute's time, he opened them and said, "Lalaji reprimanded me. He said, 'Why are you after Vivekananda since morning? If he doesn't do your work which you want, I'm here, tell me, I'll do it'."

I had the rare privilege of reading the originals of the second volume of Babuji's autobiography which he normally didn't share with

anybody. He was so kind hearted; and being in the academic field I wanted to know what was written there. And there it deals only with spiritual matters, like Lord Buddha said this and Lord Krishna said that, all in the field of spirituality. It is not only spiritual things which are controlled from there, the entire world affairs are controlled. If Babuji had printed everything in the original manuscript it would have created a lot of problems. He could not print the details of everything. So I want to give those abhyasis who never had the privilege of knowing Babuji Maharaj personally a chance to know about him now. They know about me now who knew Babuji. So in point of time there is only one man in between.

Babuji's work was Nature's work. I do not know how much time he devoted to Sahaj Marg. His basic work was laying the foundations for events which are yet to come, a hundred, five hundred, ten thousand years from now. And for that the foundation had to be laid. The situation moves gradually, otherwise there would be a sudden disruption in the whole system. So what future plans he was working on, I really don't know, may Chariji know. But I definitely know that he was working way into the future, God knows how many years.

Adapted from a talk given by Dr. Harnam Singh at the New Jersey seminar of 1986.

"People are Deceived by My Simplicity"

THE LATE HELEN SINGH, NEW DELHI

While The Beloved Remembered *was in preparation, Christine Prisland came across some letters detailing Babuji's physical condition in hospital from her Canadian abhyasi sister, the late Helen Singh, wife of Harnam Singh of New Delhi. Mrs. Singh, who was devoted to Babuji Maharaj, was killed in a freak car accident on April 19, 1983, the day of Babuji's mahasamadhi. The first letter is dated February 10, 1983 and here follows an extract:*

"Babuji is now progressing day by day. The "No Visitors" sign is still on the door and the doctors' wishes are (I hope) being strictly adhered to by all. This is not because of Babuji's condition which, as I've said, is 'good' but because of the amount of sickness (mostly head colds and bronchial upsets) that is rampant in Delhi at this time of year, and this year particularly due to the unusually severe winter. So we haven't actually been in His room since about the 25th of January, but we daily go to the hospital or get a telephone report from one of the four or five abhyasis who are 'on duty' in His room (along with the 24-hour nurses).

He is, we learn, doing very well—alert, awake almost all of the day, moving his limbs freely, co-operating fully with the therapist, speaking (infrequently and very very quietly so that it's not easy to tell what he's saying). Yesterday he stood up for about half a minute, but the exciting thing is that now he shows definite signs of **wanting** to "get going", whereas up until January 20th it was heartbreaking to see him lying there throughout the day with his eyes closed, and sometimes tears falling.

There was a dramatic improvement on the 20th. We saw him on the 21st and I will never forget it! He was sitting in his bed, eyes fully open, moving his gaze from person to person, wiggling his toes, shifting his

hands and shoulders, looking happy as we had not seen him since he returned from Paris. He looked at Harnam and me with His "old look" that was so full of grace, and moved his lips and tried to raise his hands in greeting when we left. It was an experience I'll never forget, I can tell you.

Since then he has had one or two "not so good" days but nothing serious, and his progress has been steady. The doctors are very happy and any day now he'll be discharged and moved to the house that has been prepared for him. It is a brand new four-bedroom house in a quiet area on the outskirts of Delhi, and is allotted to an abhyasi who is Principal of a College. Perhaps you know him—Panwar. The NS Rao's are already staying there and if He agrees, they will keep Babuji here, near the hospital for about a year. Let us see.

He already indicates he wants, 1) to go to Shahjahanpur and, 2) his hookah—both of which are, of course, no-no's at this stage. The tubes are still in nose and throat but yesterday he drank a full glass of soup by mouth. The doctors say there is no hurry about taking out the tubes, and they don't seem to bother him. Only they inhibit his talking...."

And in her letter to Sister Christine dated February 27, 1983, Sister Helen wrote:

"This is just to tell you that Babuji has now been moved to the Helvetia Clinic (Room 8, ground floor) at B-2 Greater Kailash, New Delhi. This is a private clinic run by Indian doctors who are exceedingly well qualified with degrees from the USA and various European countries (two from Switzerland). It is much more cheerful, homelike, cleaner and brighter than the hospital and I'm sure He will respond to this atmosphere very positively. Already he seems happier, we hear, and is now sitting in bed and after drinking his honey and water, he washes his hands and mouth himself. Most of his nourishment still goes in by nose, but as the doctors are observing him these days, they may find that they can remove them soon. This, hopefully, would allow him to speak audibly.

The visitors are allowed only from five to six and they are very strict—which is good. When we have been there he has been sleeping deeply and peacefully, but we get daily word by phone from one of those in attendance and they say he's very happy there. His special nurses who are

very efficient and devoted to Him, have come with him. No medication is needed—only protein food and other revitalising things which are sent by European abhyasis. So the prospect is good. As soon as he regains strength—can stand, etc.—he will be moved to the house that has been prepared for him in Delhi...."

"And I Will Give You Much More"

LEA STEIN, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

In the courtyard, at the entrance to the family area part of Babuji's home, I was standing with Nini, Babuji's grandchild, who had made a deep impression on all of us with her graceful serenity. We were talking softly, carefully approaching each other's lives. Babuji was sitting in his rocking chair, puffing on his hookah, surrounded by a small circle of associates. Suddenly my head was drawn in his direction. He had been watching us. His quick, intense glance struck mine for a short moment we were lost in each other's eyes. The moment faded but its precious essence unfolded in time.

On the day of departure from Babuji's house I was standing in the sun up against the whitewashed wall of the printing office. Next to me Malin was squatting, wreathing garlands. We were laughing to each other and amusing and enjoying ourselves without words. Behind the drawn bamboo curtain, Babuji was occupied with some visitors. Suddenly there was a clear sense of a strong pull across the courtyard: connecting my heart with His. Inside, a feeling of exultation arose, "I go but I don't leave."

Five fully loaded rickshaws were waiting in the alley outside the yard. We had taken a tender farewell of Babuji at his armchair in the loggia. The procession of rickshaws was ready for the adventurous ride towards the railway station, an hour's ride through the town, which the darkness had changed completely. From every gate and crack lights in many colours gleamed, glittered and sparkled. We were armed with flashlights for the darker areas. Still absorbed in His presence, we hardly realised what our stay had implied. And then, surprisingly, all of a sudden, he was sitting on a small chair close to the gate. As by a magnet Barbara and I found ourselves, halfway kneeling on either side of the chair. With joy and parting tears it burst out of me, "Master, you have given us so much." He then leaned towards us, and when very close, Babuji whispered, "And I will give you much more."

"It is Simple"

M. MAHADEVAN, NAGPUR, INDIA

It was November 1971, and we were sitting with Babuji when Parthasarathi introduced an old man. He told Babuji that the man had been worshipping Hanuman for the last fifty years or so. Babuji talked to him for about twenty minutes and when he left he turned to us and said, "See the poor old man, instead of worshipping the Master, is worshipping the servant."

Once Babuji told us that Saint Narada was going somewhere when a rishi called him and asked him whether he would meet Lord Vishnu. Narada said that he would. Then the rishi asked Narada to remind Lord Vishnu that he had asked something which the Lord had so far not given. The rishi asked Narada to bring Lord Vishnu's reply when he returned. When Narada reached Vaikunt and asked Lord Vishnu, he replied, "There is nothing. Forget it." When Narada insisted on knowing the rishi's prayer, Lord Vishnu replied, "The rishi asks that the entire world should not suffer for anything. All the suffering should go to this rishi. How is it possible?"

Babuji told us that once a member of Lalaji's family got sick. Lalaji could cure immediately with his spiritual power, but he did not want to do it. He went to call a doctor. The doctor was ten to fifteen kilometres away and Lalaji only had a bullock cart at that time. In seconds, he was knocking at the door of the doctor's house. The doctor knew Lalaji and he immediately went and got his kit and enquired about how to go to the house. Lalaji asked the doctor to close his eyes and to hold his hands. The doctor obliged him. Next second, Lalaji asked the doctor to open his eyes, and they were in Lalaji's house, in front of the patient. The doctor broke out in a sweat in the cold midnight, but carried on his examination of the patient. When the doctor finished, he prescribed some medicines. Then

again Lalaji asked him to hold his hands and close his eyes. After a second the doctor heard Lalaji tell him to open his eyes. When the doctor opened his eyes, he was standing in his house but Lalaji was not there.

When Babuji finished the story, we asked him how this was possible and he replied, "It is simple. Think that you have lost your physical consciousness. What remains is only astral and causal. It will go anywhere in a split second." Babuji was explaining *bava*, action: "When you come in front of me, standing and asking me for a cup of water in your language which I don't understand (say Tamil) you won't get anything because I have not understood what you are asking." With this he stopped. When we asked him how to ask, He said, "By *bava*, by action, I can understand immediately."

When I was with Babuji Maharaj for ten days He was constantly remembering Chariji. He did this, he did that, without him the Mission would not have grown so rapidly, something or other, he was in constant remembrance of our Masterji.

"Drown Yourself in Master"

SUDHA SWAMINATHAN, MYSORE, INDIA

I started practising the Sahaj Marg system of meditation from November 1981 and I went into meditation as smoothly as a fish slips through water but it is unfortunate that I had to pass through slush initially. Rev. Babuji protected me all along, but for his grace I would not have been here to write about my association with Him.

When I was at Shahjahanpur for Basant in 1981, I saw Babuji going round to see the arrangements. As I looked at Him, I had an urge to just hold His hand and take Him around the premises as I used to take my grandfather for a walk when I was young. So, I walked straight to Him, stood right in front with an extended hand and looked at Him. He looked into my eyes did *namaste* by joining his hands, with a sweet smile. I also did *namaste* and gave place for Him to proceed on with Chariji holding His hand and followed them. So when I went to lead him, he just made me follow Him.

After the Surat celebrations for his birthday, Babuji came to Vadodara when we were introduced to Him. He just stared at me and said, "I am leaving tomorrow." I replied, "Yes, we are coming with you to Ahmedabad, Master," thinking that He had told me about His next day's programme. This is the only sentence that He has spoken to me. I was so thrilled that I stood outside the open door of His room where He sat quietly on a cot with abhyasis pressing His legs. I too wished to go in, but could not do so due to inhibitions. I saw Babuji lying down with his eyes. A brother abhyasi came and stood outside in front of us. I looked at his hands that been pressing the legs of the Master. I was so overwhelmed with feelings that I very secretly touched that brother's hand, as if it was accidental and touched my eyes with my hands in reverence.

When I looked into the room, I saw Babuji had got up and was walking towards me, alone. I felt like rushing to Him and I was also thinking that he might come to the door, but at that moment, I thought how could I who was so gross, go to the Master who was so pure? Our preceptor had told that the grossness of abhyasis will affect the Master and I did not want it to happen to Him by me. I was confused, I stood there fixed to the ground looking at Babuji who was also staring at me a few yards away. Then he turned and went back to the cot to lie down as before with his arms around his head. I cursed myself because when He had taken a few steps towards me, I did not taken even one step towards him.

Nearly ten months after this incident, I had a dream in which I saw Babuji standing right in front of me and just as I tried to look at him, I noticed a heap of something which I recognised as grossness between us. Then Babuji asked me to give all my grossness to him and not to bother about it. In the next scene I was seeing only Babuji Maharaj.

Once after the night prayer, I heard someone telling me "find out the truth." There was nobody in the house but I did hear it very clearly. After the Surat celebrations Babuji gave a sitting and I was right in front of Him throughout the sitting, I was feeling restless and weeping. I wanted to know everything about the Master, but I hardly knew anything about him; he was so close to me yet I felt he is so far off from me. Such thoughts disturbed me and I wanted to know how to surrender, how to find out the truth, etc. At that moment, I felt a silent whisper in my heart which said, "Drown Yourself in Master," and as I repeated it mentally I heard Babuji saying, "That Is All."

On the morning of April 30,1982, Babuji did not come to the meditation hall, but I saw Him seated on his chair as soon as I entered the hall, there was so much transmission that immediately after sitting down, I closed my eyes. An announcement by Br. Sarnadji shocked me and when I opened my eyes, I did not see Babuji who had not come at all.

In 1991, we had built a house at Vadodara and I wanted Master Chariji to come home. This wish was fulfilled in a peculiar way by Babuji. I had gone out to meet the doctor and reached home by ten thirty in the morning. As I entered the house, I got the smell of tobacco. I checked that there was nobody there and my husband does not smoke. From where

could I get such a strong tobacco smell? I always disliked that smell, but that day, it was so intoxicatingly pleasant and soothing to me that I started enjoying it. The smell lasted for quite some time so His presence was felt in our home.

On February 3, 1993, Babuji revealed to me that He is present in me. The whole day was spent in the company of abhyasis and I reached home in the evening at seven. I was in a totally drowned state and I attended to everything as if in a dream. I even read 'My Pain' in *Voice Real*. Before, when I used to read this, I felt really sad for his pain. But that day, as I was reading it, I felt as if it was written by me and His feelings were very much mine. I am mentioning these identities now as I write for the sake of understanding. I was not there, I was Babuji Himself. Well, is it possible to express all experiences in words? Expression in words fail when feelings dominate an experience. So, maybe a taste of a higher condition was bestowed upon me in the waking state only to create some enthusiasm in me.

My husband returned from his office about half past ten and after finishing his cleaning he said that as he entered the house there was lot of radiation around my face, and lot of transmission was coming and the drawing room appeared glowing. It was so overpowering that he could not utter a word. Maybe for a few hours Babuji had taken me over? How wonderful if it had been permanent.

The essence of the Master is beyond all sensory experiences, but since we use our senses to perceive even Divinity, He is prepared to come down to our level, even play some tricks only to direct us towards Himself. So, it is all a part in the process of unbecoming to become like Him. All these revelations have helped me dwell deep within myself, to catch the essence of the Master within myself.

"God was There..."

PIA PELLIZZERI, IMPERIA, ITALY

I started the Sahaj Marg practice in December 1977 in France and I saw Babuji for the first time in Munich in May 1980. That was my first seminar with Master. But for me the meeting was quite shocking and what I remember are only silent tears coming without end. All the rest has faded into fragmentary feelings of surprise, astonishment, charm, curiosity and egocentrism.

The first real meeting with Babuji happened in India at his house in Shahjahanpur in December 1980. It was my first trip in India, programmed for nine days in total, including the journey. It was intended as a spiritual journey, as nothing else appealed to me in India then. It was in effect a special and unique one: the summary of all my past lives and the meeting with my Spiritual Father! I didn't understand a word of English and I didn't manage to use the few sentences learnt in a speedy English course I took for a short time before leaving. I felt very stupid, but the experience was full of wonder and India captured me. Above all, my heart recognised what consciously it had been looking for in many and various places, through different and unnecessary ways: the Father's Love!

I remember Babuji sat on his chair with some abhyasis in front of him; a few from the West, all others from various centres in India. In effect, Paolo, Dario and I had all gone to Babuji's house in spite of the information for all abhyasis to wait for Master at the ashram. We were all sitting in the shade in the courtyard of Babuji's house. He asked us if we had eaten and when we said no, he sent us to the ashram for lunch with the promise that he would reach all later in the afternoon.

The most moving moment of that visit was the departure. It was getting dark and someone was organising a single trip of all overseas

abhyasis to the railway station of Shahjahanpur. Many rickshaws were waiting in front of Babuji's house, a fire illuminated the courtyard and we were exchanging the last greetings. Babuji was standing near us directing all arrangements for departure. My memory is centred on that intense moment and words are not enough to describe it. Really speaking it wasn't a departure but an arrival—a moment in which life stood still and contracted in terms of time and space condensed. There, without words, the connection with the core of the heart happened.

Then the last seminar in France at Chatenay-Malabry, near Paris, was in August 1982. In me was present an unwanted feeling of anxiety towards Babuji and, for the first time, an attraction and confidence towards Chariji. But trepidation was for Babuji with a strong obsessive wish to be near Him. Like a fly attracted to honey I was going around to the building where He was accommodated with Chariji. The abhyasis keeping guard were unbending, but when possible I tried to enter into His room, or into Chariji's room and when Chariji was absent for a moment called by Babuji, I even tried to follow. That seminar closed for me with a deep passivity to the separation which again expressed itself, as in the first meeting, through a flood of tears shed on the grass lawns of the Chatenay-Malabry campus. Babuji had left, forever.

In 1984 at the end of October, I went to Madras with a group of French abhyasis to meet Chariji. After Babuji's *mahasamadi,* controversies arose around His successor and I felt the need to prove through the heart the real essence of that continuity—the transmission. This happened at 'Gayathri', Chariji's house, just at the beginning of the first satsangh: an image, a profile of Babuji appeared, the same as the photo by J.M. Bottequin, and on that face Chariji's profile superimposed itself. In that moment my heart exclaimed, "Oh Master!"

The joy of that moment cannot be expressed, I can only say, "Thank you Master!"

"...A Green Bucket That You Can Use"

SYLVIA WOLTJER, THE NETHERLANDS

I wanted to take a trip to Findhorn in Scotland where I had started meditation, because I was troubled that something was missing in my life. So, one evening I prayed solemnly and in answer to that a friend came and told me not to go to Findhorn. "Why don't you go with me to India?" he asked. It was as though a knob was switched on in my head. Why not? I would never have gone on my own.

During our trip in the following March 1981, he told me about his Master which made me long to meet somebody radiating a love that I could feel and with one glance could see what I needed. But when we arrived at the ashram in Varkala (Kerala), his Master was in Europe. Then in Madras my friend had an accident and had to go back to Holland. After two restless nights I decided to stay and visit an Indian family living near Bangalore who were followers of the same guru as my friend. I spent a nice time with this family, but I did not feel much in relation to spirituality.

Finally, after four weeks I took a flight home and found myself sitting on the plane beside two abhyasis from Holland. They were on their way back from Shahjahanpur and when they told me about Babuji and the transmission, I thought, "Oh this man is already eighty-two years old, I should hurry to meet him." I felt that I was flying in the wrong direction. I had to go back to India as soon as possible as I felt that my deepest hope might come true there. Five months later, I left for India with another abhyasi, going first to Madras to meet Chariji.

When I got to the ashram in Shahjahanpur it was not possible to meet Babuji because he was ill. Even so, I soon felt Him working on me. One afternoon I suddenly felt and saw a stream being pulled out of my chest containing all kinds of objects. This lasted for about five or ten

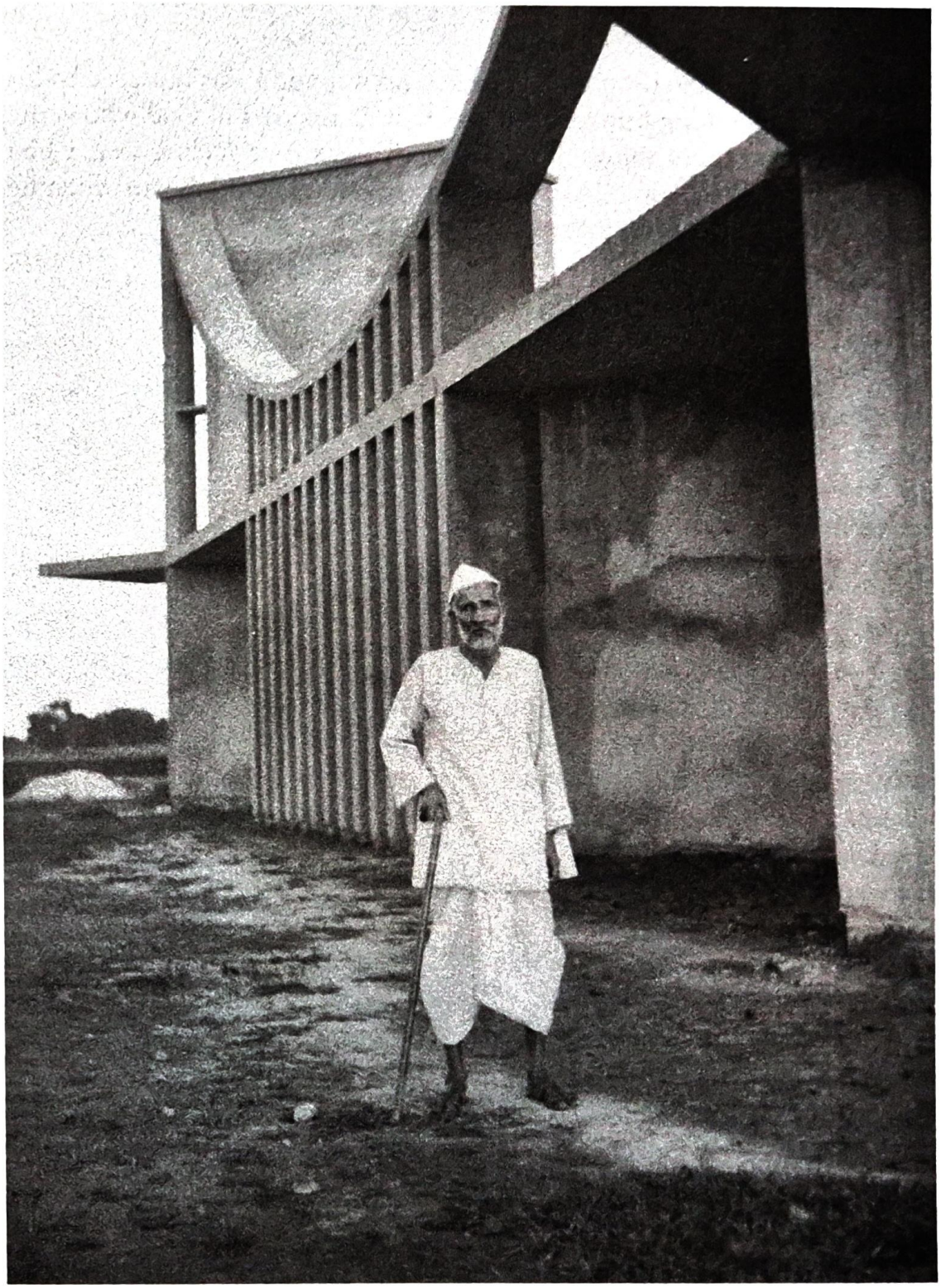
minutes, gave me a feeling of deep sorrow, and I cried bitter tears. Then an inner voice said, "This was good work, now you go downstairs and have a warm shower." And, as if encouraging me, I heard, "You will find a green bucket that you can use." I kept on looking for this green bucket and finally went outside wnere an Indian man was filling it with hot water and handed it to me without saying a word.

After two or three days I was sitting alone in the meditation hall in front of the cushions that were obviously his seat. While I was trying to meditate I plunged into pondering over my life so far and feelings of anger were coming up. Suddenly I was interrupted by a strict inner voice telling me to do the Mission prayer. Having finished the prayer I felt satisfied, because I had met Him.

When Babuji came to the ashram it struck me how like my father he looked, and his radiance was shining and loving. During the sitting I felt deeply moved and cried and tried to hide it so as not to disturb others. Afterwards I recognised what Chariji had often explained, that the hard covering of the heart had opened. Some weeks later I visited Chariji in Madras and I told him about my experiences. He only stressed the importance of meeting Babuji personally and attending Basant.

During Basant 1982 I had the opportunity of meeting Babuji in his cottage on the ashram premises, we didn't but I felt He was studying or cleaning something in me. After Basant, I remember how extremely happy he looked as he walked around. It gave me a tremendously warm feeling to see him like that and I thought that his Master must have blessed him very much during Basant. A small group of us stayed in the ashram and Babuji came to the ashram several times to give us sittings. We also went to his house and while he was busy in his office and walking around we sat quietly in front of his office or on the veranda in a timeless space. Most of the time, nobody spoke. What I felt was an incredible pure, loving atmosphere that made me forget everything it was enough just to be there with Him, just as it is now with Chariji.

The last evening I spent with Babuji I felt a bit troubled about what to tell my friends about this splendid nothingness? It was the last chance to ask him personally what he could give me: was it salvation or something else? He reacted excitedly and asked a family member to get his teeth, so



that he would be able to speak. His voice was soft and I was not used to his accent. The one thing I understood was that he referred to God who is the only one to do these things and I left with the strong feeling that I had asked the wrong question. Later I understood what Chariji meant when he told us, "Don't ask a king for just a penny."

"The Help of a Guru or Master is Essential"

C.P. SHARMA, AHMEDABAD, INDIA

When Rev. Babuji Maharaj was in the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi in 1982–83 before His departure to the brighter world, I used to visit him there occasionally with one of my colleagues who was an abhyasi. I did not even know the ABC of Sahaj Marg. My friend told me, "He is our spiritual Master and nowadays he is sick. We do meditation under his guidance."

I used to wonder, like any other ordinary human being why, when Babuji was the Master, was he so sick? He should be able to remove the suffering. We used to look at Babuji through a glass window. I did not see his face. I saw his body covered in clothes, very lean and thin.

My friend said we could not go inside, we could pray outside. The thought used to come to my mind that what a pity for me that I came in contact with a spiritual master in such a situation when he was not able to see me, not able to talk to me. I did not know what he could do for me like that. Perhaps it was too late.

All this I did not tell my friend, I did not know how he would take it. He told me to pray. I did not know to whom to pray, what to pray and why to pray? We used to stand in the corridor from where we could see Babuji Maharaj through the glass window and I used to murmur to myself, "I don't know whether I will be able to see you physically and talk to you, but if you are a real master, I wish that I will be able to reach my real goal of life." Then, I used to pray for his early recovery. This would have happened three or four times during that period but this was my first meeting.

After that I forgot everything, and I changed my job and was transferred to another place. During the next five years things changed in

such a way that I was transferred and had to move from North India to South India, a thing I had never thought of doing, and on 18th June 1988 I was at the lotus feet of my Master Chariji. That was the Red Letter Day of my life.

Even today, I wonder at how it happened. He heard my prayer and not only showed me the path, but also sent me to my beloved Master. So, all I can say is that my first meeting with Babuji was successful and fruitful. Whatever I am today is all because of His immense love and affection.

I am grateful to Him.

"I Await You for Another Trip"

ELISABETH POIVERT, MARSEILLES, FRANCE

After a simple childhood, some studies and my marriage which left me a lot of time for introspection, the question of where I came from, who I was and where I was going came to me rather early on. The belief in Christ was already a total surrender to the inner mystery. Nonetheless, I was stumped by this abstraction which did not satisfy me and I needed to live in a deeper dimension, so I took the metaphysics of India. Marvelling at India's great masters and the writings of their saints, I studied without let up.

I also discovered that hatha yoga could educate my body, modify my thought and mind and in that way transform my way of living. And it was then that I met Shri Ram Chandraji of Shahjahanpur, the One who would become my Master and lead the inner experience to the true knowledge, beyond all mental perception or intelligence, the knowing that can only be perceived in silence.

As soon as I had my introductory sittings I became ready to obey Him who had chosen me. Numerous trips to India accentuated this state in his presence and each separation tortured me. Confronted by immense fears, my evident transformation, revealed by Him and His work, I did not lose hold. I began to love him. It was the grace which leads to unity, surrender, the close rapport between two souls, a disciple and a guru.

Every year I went again to Him with the same fever, the same impatience, the same wonder for this old man about whom I knew nothing, but whom I savoured in silence, near to Him who was working for Eternity. I was there because I needed to be, because he wished it. He began to 'break' this creation to uncover his own. But in those days I didn't understand, I only obeyed, confident and disciplined, physically of fragile

health, always ill, inept as well, I bore these trips with difficulty. And one day in his courtyard where, exasperated, rebellious, I thought strongly of running away, never to return, Babuji came to ask me, "How many times have you come to India? I await you for another trip."

He missed nothing. He looked into our souls like a laser over defective tissue and with a view to reconstructing them. Paradoxically, I was not displeased with this invitation. He accepted me, wanted me and my heart was ready to obey Him. My last trip, or so I thought at the time, was to the Clinic Helvetia in New Delhi were he was a patient and from where He would leave us some time later. I would never see him again.

I remember the special atmosphere in that clinic where we were a small group of French abhyasis already worried about the future, agitated and sad. I "spaced out," turned inward in a corner without suffering and yet in the sight of that poor body which they were still trying to keep alive and which was being moved about before our eyes. Later, I knew that He had offered me the opportunity to understand that physical death was nothing and that one could rejoice over it, or at least be detached from it.

Back in France when I heard of his *mahasamadhi* I felt despair and orphaned. What was I to become without Him. This state of uneasiness, of despair, lasted two or three months but in His infinite love for us, in His immense goodness he had prepared everything and soon the Presence was revealed to me of another whom He had chosen to help us. I knew him, it would not be long before I recognised him, Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari, the one whom I had always encountered in loving attendance upon Babuji. Parthasarathi appeared to me in a dream, dressed in white and riding a bicycle and he fixed me with the same glance I had from him one day on a pathway during a Basant. He instructed me in this dream to go and meditate until I lost consciousness in total absorption.

They were two, they are three, they are more than one now. My gratitude to Babuji is immense, my love for Him eternal. May Parthasarathi's hopes, efforts in commitment to his Master be facilitated by our total co-operation and our love for him.

"Things Come and Go"

LESLIE ROMANO, NEW MEXICO, USA

After the 1982 gathering in Paris I was stalked by someone who had become obsessed with me and absolutely unhinged. I spent weeks praying to Babuji to save my life. There was obviously some kind of link between me and the stalker, but I was helpless to break it.

Inexplicably, a year or two prior to all of this I had hung on my bedroom wall a picture of a dancer who looked almost exactly like this man stalking me. This large framed and glassed picture was leaned on my bookcase against the wall with a plant potted in loose soil placed in front of it. One day when this stalking business was reaching a fever pitch, I heard a tremendous crash from my bedroom. I thought this man had thrown a rock through my window and I ran in. What I saw was the large picture on the floor face up, with the glass shattered. I immediately thought that the man had just died. Then I studied the scene a bit. The shattered picture was in an impossible position. The potted plant had been so gently knocked over that not a bit of soil had spilled. In short, there was no way that this could have happened naturally.

I came to understand that the man had not died but that the overpowering link between us had been broken by Babuji. It still took some time for the situation to play itself out and there was violence after all but I only had to clean up after it and was not a victim. The stalker ended up in jail and I received a raft of phone calls from social workers and such who impressed upon me how narrowly I had escaped with my life.

A year or so later an abhyasi happened to look at my birth chart. At first she doubted that I had the correct chart. Then she looked into the time of the stalking and turned pale. Alarmed, I asked her what was

wrong. She replied that the violence that was unleashed in my chart at that time was of such magnitude that she was amazed that I was alive.

So, I guess not only did Babuji save me from the stalker but in some way, saved me from myself. Not only had Babuji Maharaj had to work to change my reasons for meditating, but even had to work to keep me alive enough to meditate!

"It is Better That I Do it Myself"

M.S. PADMANABHAN, HYDERABAD, INDIA

I was not practising meditation regularly and continued the ritualistic practice until 1971, two years after I took my introductory sittings. I was working at Shakar Nagar near Nizamabad, A.P. away from preceptors. Even so, my Master was directing my life because one day during the work recess, I remembered that I had joined the Mission and was not doing practice as had been told me so I sat for meditation immediately. Transmission came like a heavy shower of rain and I sat for more than the fixed time. This experience made me do meditation daily during recess at work although I continued to do the traditional practice at home until this type of puja faded away.

During the same year I was transferred to Hyderabad and Babuji came there. During that visit I was blessed to be close to him. He told me to attend satsangh regularly as it would give fast improvement. Indeed there was speedy progress after the divine instructions, I came to know the importance of cleaning, individual sittings and satsangh with the Master.

In 1972 I went with my wife and two toddler sons to Master's home. We got down from the cycle rickshaw carrying our children and luggage. Seeing us outside Babuji got up from His chair and hurried to receive us with a welcome smile, and then picked up our suitcases. I entreated Him to let me carry the suitcases myself to which He replied, "Can I not carry this for you? Please come in." Such humility touched my heart and I thought, where can we find such a Master on this earth?

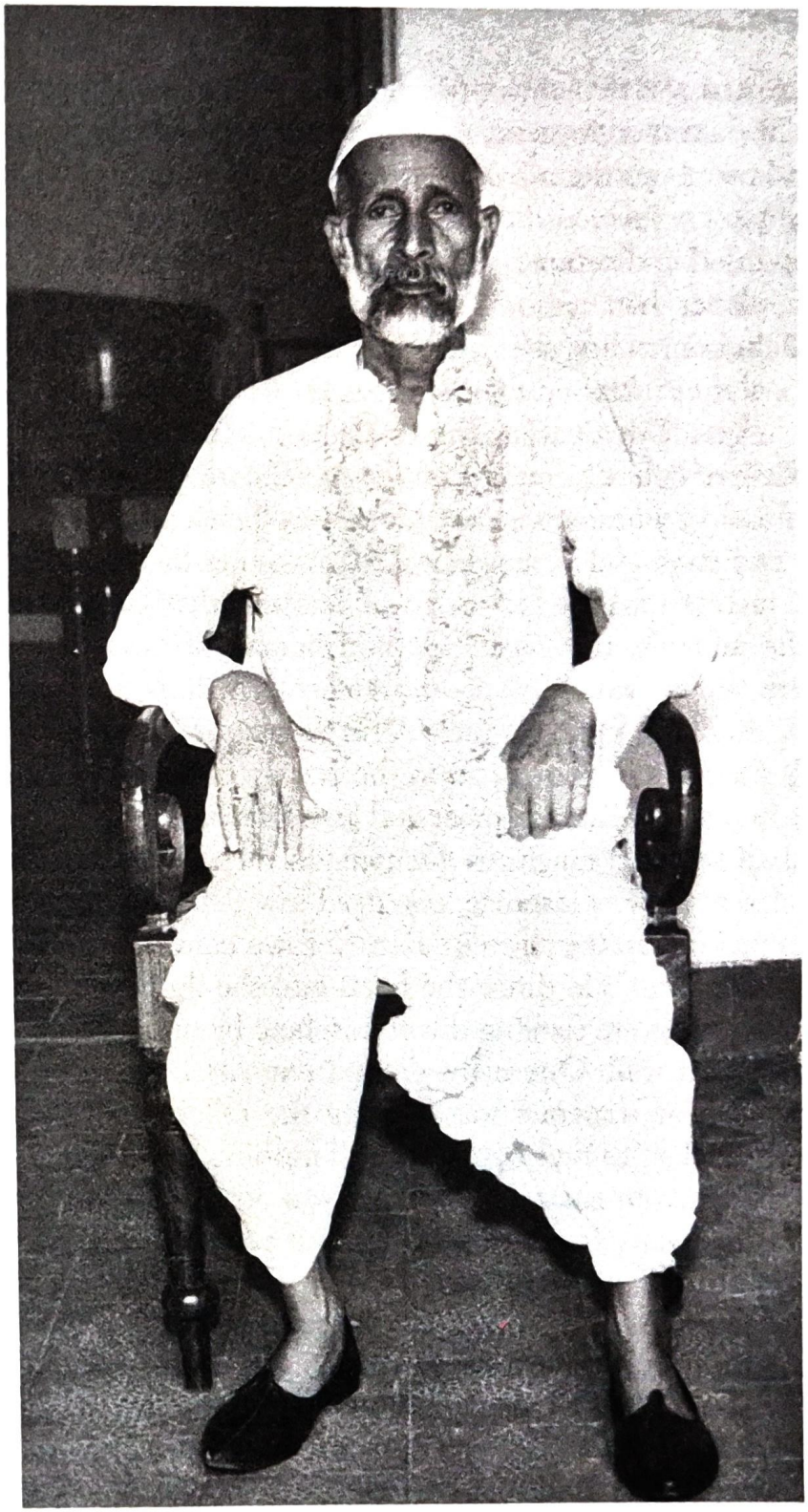
Later that year, Babuji returned to Hyderabad and I was alone with Him and mentioned that in a dream I had seen a saint who resembled Lalaji Maharaj. Babuji explained that, "Whenever the souls crave for reality, the saints do come to help." As he said this he gave me a piercing

look which stirred my heart and soul and an ecstatic condition erupted. I could not bear this and tears of utmost happiness rolled from my eyes. I submitted to Babuji saying that I was unable to contain so much of happiness. Babuji called me near Him and caressed my back and said, "Your condition is good, please do meditation regularly, you will fast improve." His touch on my back brought me to normalcy though the condition remained within me for two days.

Once I wrote to Him, "My Beloved Master, having taken you as my divine mother, I seek thy spiritual gift on the eve of my birthday which I have not celebrated until now." My birthday request was granted when I found myself automatically in meditation and felt showers of light entering my heart and I was submitting to that grace, repeatedly saying, "Master, Master...." for some time. Then as I became conscious, my body became very light. I wrote to Him about this and He said, "Whatever experiences you have is only the reflection of reality and not the reality itself, you have to go still far."

Babuji always used to say, "People come to see me but nobody really sees me." This created deep feelings in my heart and I prayed to Him to reveal Himself to me. Then one day, in the year 1978, when I was about to do cleaning in the evening, I was disturbed that I was called for duty. But then I remembered Babuji's quotation, i.e. "Duty itself is worship and in duty you have to feel the presence of the Master." Accordingly I went on duty with the presence of the Master in my heart and to my wonder I began to feel showers of transmission engulfing me completely, descending from above. I became very light and felt as if I could fly. I was perfectly conducting my duty as a guard aware of the presence of the Divine Master. The train was passing through plains and forests and I was on my own singing in the praise of my beloved Master.

At around noon the train stopped outside a small station and the station master informed me that the train had to stay in the station for another three hours. I wanted to utilise that time for puja and I sat in meditation with the same feelings I had earlier and within seconds I was totally lost to myself. After about twenty minutes there was a feeling of pleasant sensation with a pull in the heart and an urge within me to open my eyes and see. I saw, to my wonder, that there was no body, no earth, I



was moving in a galaxy of uncountable giants of planets all moving around me. I was like a tiny tot moving among them and I was able to get into the planets and come out the other side, free from earthly and bodily effects. I was in a state of enjoyment for some time and the thought arose as to how these planets orbited around without touching each other. I understood that each planet had its own magnetic field and I could visualise a powerful light connecting the north and south poles in all the planets and that was how they maintain their orbit. A little later I thought, "My goal is my Master alone, I don't want this distraction." Instantly, I felt the same powerful flash of light descending on my spinal cord, illuminating from top to bottom and I came back to earthly senses. Sense of serenity prevailed for about two days and I questioned the meaning of this experience. In successive meditations He led me to understand that every creation, the planets, the animals, the vegetation and human beings each have their own centre upon which their movements, actions and growth are controlled. And the centre which controls all the countless centres of Creation is the Master who resides in the deepest core of every living thing and we, as humans, must remember and love Him always.

Babuji Maharaj taught us discipline in such a way that the abhyasi did not feel it at all. For instance, one day I saw that Babuji, unnoticed by others, was picking up the cigarette butts thrown carelessly by the abhyasis inside His compound. He threw the butts into the dustbin outside. There were abhyasis who were spoiling the atmosphere by urinating on the outer side of compound wall. One night around one AM I got up to go to the toilet. I could hear someone was flushing the toilets with bucketsful of water. I was shocked to find Babuji himself flushing the toilets. I prayed to Him that the work be given to me. "Can you do this for me?" He asked, "See, so much of water has been provided, but people do not know how to use it. If I tell them they will be hurt, so it is better that I do it myself."

Next morning I informed all the abhyasis of this incident and requested them not to give trouble to Babuji, but in spite of repeated telling there still used to be cigarette butts here and there on the ground. So one day I took a broom to clean the area, even before I could start the work, an abhyasi came running to me objecting, "Bhai, this work is to be

done by *bangis* (low caste people) do not touch the broomstick." This in the presence of Babuji who was seated just twenty feet away.

The news that Babuji had left His physical body did not create any feeling of sorrow in me, instead I felt a spark had entered deep within my heart. Some of the abhyasis from Hyderabad rushed to Delhi on hearing the news. When they returned they told me that they did not have any feeling of sorrow even when they stood near the body of Babuji Maharaj. I felt that Babuji had not left us, rather He has spread Himself throughout the universe to guide one and all. Our Rev. Master Chariji in his book, *What is Sahaj Marg*, says that Babuji was always everywhere and is now everywhere (p. 185). Our Rev. Babuji Maharaj is eternal and forever the guiding factor for all of us. He has chosen an able representative for conducting His work.

"The Third of Lights..."

OTTO REICHENEDER, GRUNWALD, GERMANY

I met Babuji three times: first in Munich in 1980, in Paris in 1982, and in 1990 where he was in company. When Babuji came to Munich, I had been an abhyasi for about three years, but I had no idea of the importance of the Master, of the approach towards the Master or of love for the Master. My mind was turning in a triangular relationship, as I would call it today. There was at first me, then there was God, a superior outside institution, and there was a man called Babuji, who was the same age as my father and who should bring me to the "outside institution" called God.

During those days in Munich, the abhyasis were invited to come to a private home for a sitting, to stay with Master for a short time and then go home. On the next day, there was the same procedure. Years later, I heard that after the "infantry" had obediently gone home, those remaining, had a jolly good time, and I started to seriously question the benefit of obedience.

After a couple of days we shifted to a public place called "Villa Stuck". The number of abhyasis multiplied and about three hundred new abhyasis arrived. I did not understand them, which surprised me because I thought that I knew all of the Bavarian dialects, even those from the countryside. Then my wife explained to me that they were brothers and sisters from France. I was sitting in the middle of that hectic loud chaos, quite uncomfortable and quite far away from Babuji. I was totally puzzled by what was going on around me, but I was even more surprised about a sudden inner calmness, which grew more and more. In those days that was surely a new experience for me. If there are those who would call me aggressive nowadays, they certainly did not know me then. There was a

fragrance of unity in the atmosphere. I thought to myself how wonderful it would be if "Shri Ram Chandra" (I did not call him Babuji at that time) would at least look at me. And right at that moment, Babuji turned his head and looked straight at me. That lasted for about three to four seconds. During that time I had a feeling that I was falling into his eyes, into space, into infinity. Then he turned his head again, and I wondered what had happened. I felt slightly dizzy for a moment. I tried to catch his attention, thinking it would be nice if he looked towards me again, but he never did.

Two years later we met again. Business was going well, and I had just come up from Cannes (my motto was, "what for an Indian is the Ganges, is for me my Cannes"), where we had spent two weeks on holiday, some champagne was still left and the last Davidoff was not yet smoked. In short I was an experienced, "old" abhyasi! There was one day on which new abhyasis who had never met Babuji or spoken with him were allowed to enter his room in small groups. I was also asked whether I would like to go. My answer was, "No, its not necessary, I met Shri Ram Chandra already in Munich." The questioner was completely baffled. When I think back, it was not merely arrogance, but more a mixture of ignorance, innocence and a wrong understanding of brotherhood that prompted me to give others precedence in visiting him. Although this was a further turning point in my spiritual understanding, the meeting with Babuji was rather a meeting without meeting.

Our third meeting was during the celebration of Basant in 1990 at our ashram in Augerans. In the meantime my Master had permitted me to work as a preceptor. The reader of this article will kindly refrain from thoughts like, "How low is the qualification for preceptor?"—or things like that. The fact was, that I was still in Sahaj Marg and I was a preceptor.

On Basant day, in January 1990, I was permitted to conduct the morning meditation. I was in a state of deep absorption with total unawareness of what was going on around me. It came to a state where I was within our Master Chariji, conducting the satsangh within him, or if you prefer, Master conducted the satsangh, and my ego was minimised to such a degree that awaking consciousness was just barely possible. In that situation, I experienced behind Master/me three "egg-like", potentialised

lights. I knew these lights were Masters. The idea of Lalaji came very strongly to my mind and also, in a softer way, of Babuji. The third light I could not name. In a way, they were independent, but also a bit lined with each other. I had the feeling they were all transmitting, but the streams of transmission became one and went in one flow through Master and me to the abhyasis. It was as clear and real as the computer in front of me, no dreaming, sleeping or unconsciousness.

As wonderful as the experience was, there was no excitement in me afterwards. It felt very natural, a fact. I had no fear or resistance to write to Master about it. My practice as a preceptor has taught me that these two points are a help in finding out whether the "spiritual experiences" of abhyasis are real or merely the effects of cleaning. Anyway, I wrote to Master, and he not only confirmed it, but also gave a further explanation:

"I am very happy that you could recognise two of them. The third of lights was His, being triple personality—Lord Krishna."

"Things Will Become All Right at the Proper Time"

M.S. RAMASWAMI, CHENNAI, INDIA

I was attracted by the calm atmosphere that prevailed during meditation and that made me join the Mission. Both my son and I were given three sittings and taken into the Mission on 14th December 1974, but unfortunately my son dropped out in May 1975 when he failed in one paper in his B.Com examination!

I did not leave the religious practices and rituals but was, so to say, riding a double horse for a long time. Once, the then zonal secretary preceptor Br. Seshadri visited Thanjavur. I discussed temple worship with him. He sharply said that if I wanted to be in both, better quit and go to my old practice. He said it was like making ten bores of three feet depth to get water. "You are worshipping ten gods."

That night I wept during meditation and asked Babuji, "Who was Seshadri to ask me to quit?" If Babuji wanted me to go out of the Mission, then only I would go. And a vision of Babuji Maharaj appeared and said, "Continue and things will become all right at the proper time," so I remained.

One year, Chariji as general secretary came to Thanjavur for a one day celebration and when he was leaving I asked him whether I could wear the Mission badge at all times. He said, "Yes, do it. Tell about our Mission if anybody asks." This incident has a significance which I shall explain later on.

In 1978, I attended Basant Panchami at Shahjahanpur. I was very much struck by the simplicity of Babuji Maharaj. Even now I remember his divine, merciful eyes. I got Babuji's darshan for the second time at His

son's residence. He was lying in bed in a slanting position with his hands on top of his head. Creating an opportunity to talk to him, I said, "Babuji, we have no preceptor at Thanjavur." He replied, "You carry on, you will be looked after."

One year, there was a circular saying that all abhyasis should have Basant celebration in their respective centres. Nobody need go to Shahjahanpur. On that day an abhyasi brother came to inform me that the preceptor from Tiruchy had come and there was going to be a group meditation at the centre. When I got home my wife said that Babuji had come to Thanjavur for Basant. Asked to explain in detail she told me that there had been a knock at the door. When she answered she saw Babuji Maharaj standing there. She did not know what to do. Composing herself she invited him into the house. He came in and sat on the swing. As is usual of South Indian hospitality, she went and brought coffee. But alas, he was not there. I asked the preceptor whether non-abhyasis could have a vision like this. He said that there was no such thing as abhyasis or non-abhyasis. Babuji as Divine Master took care of the entire universe.

In October 1983, my son-in-law, at the age of thirty-seven had a serious heart attack. His condition was very critical on October 20th. Hearing his condition, I had to rush to Delhi by flight for which my daughter had made all arrangements. My wife and close relations were already there.

A relative met me in Madras and saw me off on the Delhi flight at six AM. There was a brief halt at Hyderabad during the three and a half-hour flight. I could not understand why a young man of thirty-seven years could suffer a serious heart attack and I took my seat and began meditating and praying to Babuji to save him, saying audibly sometimes 'RamaChandra, RamaChandra'. My chanting 'RamaChandra' was heard by a co-passenger two seats away from me.

At Delhi I was met by my uncle who also met my cousin who was the co-passenger who was wondering at me chanting 'RamChandra' throughout the flight time. On reaching the hospital, I sat in one corner and meditated. When the critical condition was all over, he was brought to the general ward. To my surprise, he said, "You please do your meditation sitting by my side".

I was there for a month and used to sit by his bedside at six every evening and meditate. I thank Babuji daily for saving my son-in-law who is now fifty-two and all right.

There used to be short speeches by the preceptor after the Sunday satsangh. In one such speech, preceptor Br. Mahalingam who used to be very sharp and precise in his observations, remarked that abhyasis claiming seniority of more than twenty years, all the time wearing Mission badges, were the first people at the Kamakshi Temple at five o'clock in the morning for all the religious practices and rituals. That meant, he said, that they did not have faith in this system. They made a farce of the statement "Thou art the only God and power to bring us to that stage." I knew that he referred to me for it largely affected my attitude and I began to ponder over this. Slowly transformation started setting in and I gave up temple worship.

The Golden Jubilee of Basant 1995 was a significant one for me. That year, my wife also joined the Mission and attended the Basant celebration. To explain to her, I began reading Mission books. Slowly things began to be understood by me. Babuji gave twenty-two sittings to one abhyasi. I realised that it has taken twenty-one years to break samskaras that were solidified like hard rock on my heart.

By April-May 1995, when my wife was ill, she slowly dropped out of the abhyas believing that it had caused her physical condition. I recall that Babuji pointed out that women had their own ways of protecting their children and husbands and he said that we should let them have their way, but be strict in our own efforts to achieve the goal.

I have stopped doing death anniversary rituals for my father and mother. Instead, those days during morning meditation I pray to my Divine Master to liberate their souls. Sahaj Marg has become the way of life for me.

"Discipline, Love, Knowledge"

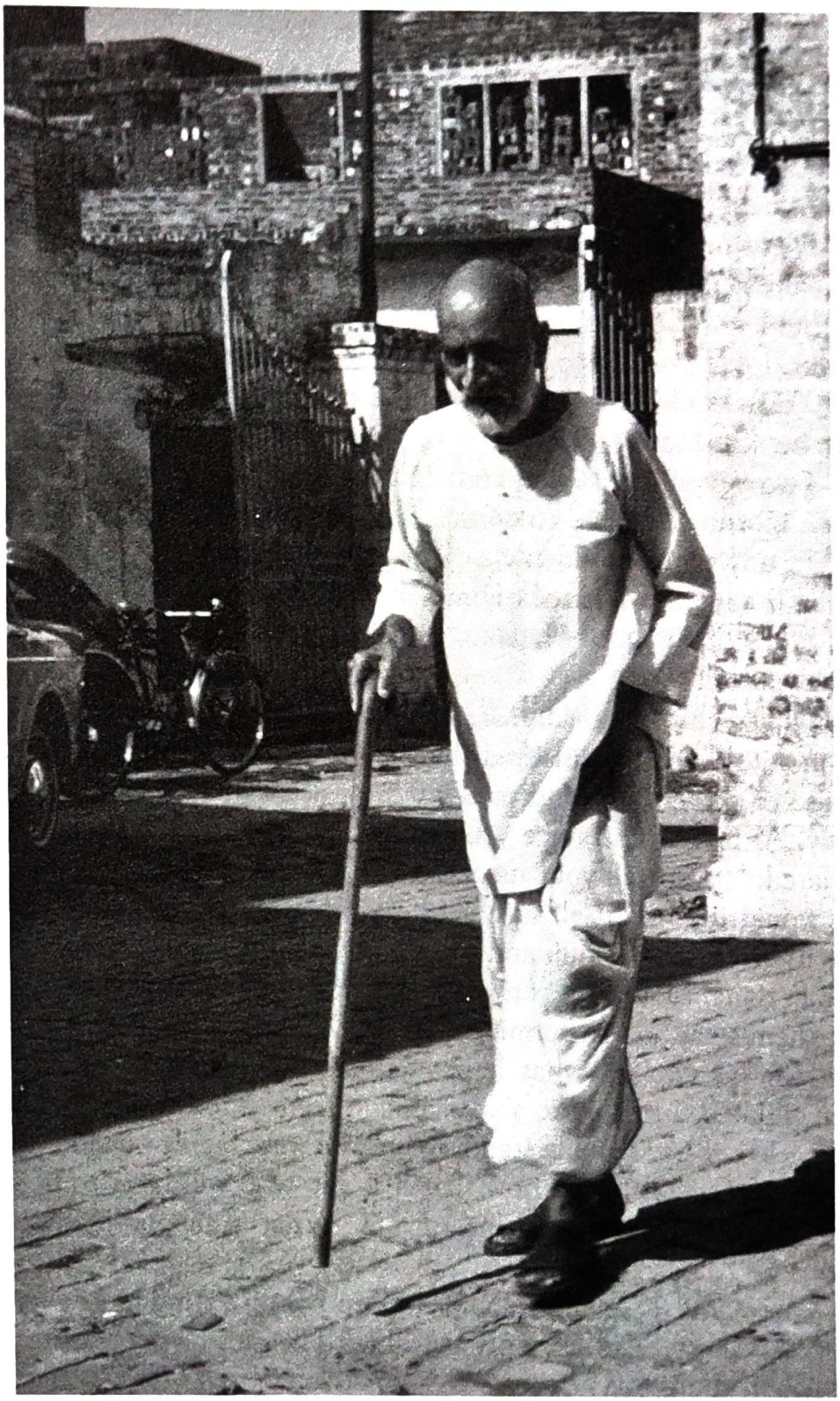
MADELEINE BADACH, TOULON, FRANCE

When I started meditating in 1978, I only did it from time to time and I felt that I was betraying my religious roots, but nevertheless in October 1980, a sudden need arose to go and see Babuji. The school year had begun and I could not imagine asking my husband for money to go and meet an Indian guru. But then the Teachers' Union announced a strike and the same day I received a cheque that would cover the air ticket to India. I left with another abhyasi.

In India, I was horrified by so much misery and also, from the second day I was ill with stomach cramps. We were advised, before meeting Master, to go to Lucknow to see Sister Kasturi, the preceptor who was so close to Babuji Maharaj. The train was crowded, even the roof held passengers, but Sister Kasturi really impressed me with her quiet gentleness. After three days and six sittings she said, "You are becoming more presentable. You will be able to go and see the Master tomorrow."

And so we took a night train to Shahjahanpur. The stations were dark and the signs were in Hindi so it seemed a miracle that we got off at the right place. We were told that Shahjahanpur was dangerous and ordered not to move until morning. What an adventure.

When we arrived at the ashram, Babuji was already there. I hardly had time to settle when I heard "Please start meditation." I did not close my eyes. I had gone through so many difficulties to get there that I wanted to see this Master who was the point of it all. For an instant, Babuji's eyes lost themselves in mine. I felt naked. Suddenly I could see myself from inside. It was terrible. How could I live with such a sombre vision of my soul? I tried to hide my tears of despair. I cried for two days. Preceptors told me, "The Master is our mirror," and gradually my despair faded to



sadness. After two days, a state of peace settled in my heart. And then for twenty-four hours I was able to live in a spiritual condition, capable of humour and light-heartedness. People came to me, and I amused them. I regret not being able to keep that condition.

Every morning for two weeks we went to Babuji's house by rickshaw. It upset me to be pulled along by a poor under-nourished man and to see mutilated children begging, but Babuji's home was a port of peace. However, I kept my distance, finding those who stuck close to Him childish. How could I have met Babuji Maharaj and not realised how lucky I was to be near him?

Two years later, I saw Him in France. Walking towards the platform one morning He had to crouch. He was so weak, His legs would not hold Him any more. Suddenly, my heart swelled with love. I wanted to take Him in my arms and rock Him like a child and heal Him. Nature had blessed me with the gift of healing. But I immediately thought, "What do you take yourself for?"

I loved the expression Master used, "A mind badly regulated is like a wild monkey." He also insisted that our evolution could be slowed if we made use of powers. I found myself sitting at His feet, my heart beating furiously. Although His voice was almost inaudible, I felt the force when he declared, "I want all your names, all!" I gave my name seriously, aware that it would inscribe itself at a subtle level. I felt this would be my last chance to be close to Babuji and expose my dilemma, since powers are not allowed in Sahaj Marg. It was the moment to ask Him, silently in my heart, to take them away and to permit me to evolve spiritually.

How to explain what happened next? I felt as if my body had suddenly dilated. I started to shake. Babuji seemed to be asleep. We were asked to leave. I had trouble standing up. We were barely outside when an abhyasi approached me, "I know that it is you who will have to heal me." And I was sure Babuji had heard me. What disappointment. I felt abandoned.

One night, I suddenly could not see Babuji sitting in His seat. For long seconds I watched the empty seat. I felt I was losing my reason. I have never spoken about this before.

Soon after, we heard that Babuji was very sick. I dreamed of Lalaji. Brusquely, he said to me, "Heal your Master." Very troubled, I spoke to my preceptor who said gently, "You know, we must be a hundred abhyasis feeling concern about Master's health."

On the night of April 18, 1983, I dreamed again of Lalaji. Sadly but severely, He said, "We cannot force you to heal your Master." The following day, we heard of Master's death. The preceptor consoled me by saying, "Master's life is beyond our understanding. It is He who decided His departure."

My grief was strong. I started to read His book. I cried inside. I had a sense of having missed a fantastic opportunity. I felt like an orphan. A few months later, I learned that Chariji was Babuji's successor. Having missed one chance, I decided I would go to Madras as soon as possible. During an individual sitting, I felt very centred. Suddenly, it was as though something was opening behind my head, with lightening passing through. Lalaji, Babuji and Chariji seemed to merge as one. Lalaji said, "I am discipline." Babuji said, "I am love," and Chariji said, "I am discipline, love and knowledge." In March 1984 I went to Madras, finally discovering the reason for my existence. I had found my Master.

"Proceed Towards the Unknown"

KUMARI BALAGOPAL, SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

Babuji's first visit to Malaysia was wonderful. I was blessed with the opportunity of cooking for him and I felt close to him. It was in that April 1976 that I was made the first Malaysian preceptor, Chariji gave me the sittings. During Babuji's stay, I felt like I was floating. I experienced something in me which I am unable to explain. No words can explain what Babuji meant to me.

It was our good fortune to be told that Babuji would be coming to our home and I was to prepare something for dinner for him, and at the same time I was warned not to assume that he would eat anything. I said my prayer, cooked his meal, and we all waited for him like little children. That day made history in my life. My Master came and the atmosphere was bliss. He gave the sitting and ate the simple food that I had prepared.

The second time I saw Master was when I visited him in Shahjahanpur in December 1979 and during that week I saw him twice a day. In the mornings some of us would take a rickshaw ride or walk to His house and in the evenings he would come to the ashram. During that time too I experienced certain changes, dwelling in his Divine grace so that I had totally forgotten to inform home that I had arrived safely. After a week's stay in the ashram, Babuji told me that I should return. Reluctantly I purchased the ticket and bade Master goodbye. At the station while waiting for the train, an abhyasi approached me and helped me to locate my coach and seat. I knew it was Master seeing that his child went back safely.

Babuji came again to Malaysia in April 1981 for his 82nd Birthday celebrations. It was indeed a memorable visit. I had never seen him in that

mood before. Most of the time he was talking and laughing, although sometimes he would suddenly be quiet.

When the programme was drawn, the secretary in Malaysia said that Babuji would visit only the Seremban and Klang centres. Then, after the birthday celebrations were over, the satsangh met at the Petaling Jaya Centre which was in my house. I approached my present Master and he lovingly said to go ahead with the preparations, but not to be too sure that Babuji would attend.

So with the help of some abhyasis we started the preparations. We were well ready before the time. At last Babuji arrived. He had come! My heart opened when I saw my Master. I'll always treasure Master's visit to Malaysia. Now I see Him in Chariji.

"Fix Up Your Goal..."

R. RAM SHASTRY, KARNATAKA, INDIA

After the demise of my mother in my early childhood I was brought up by my *doddamma* (my mother's elder sister). I used to accompany her inquisitively to the *Puranas*, *Pravachanas* and other satsangh activities. Her observance of *Ekadashi*, fasting on *Shivarathri*, and so many spiritual *vratas* possibly left a deeper impression on my infant mind than I realised.

Later I moved to the city to continue my studies. Now, Shri Raghavendra Swamy of Mantralaya, Shri Saibaba of Sirdi, and later Shri Sthyasaibaba of Puttaparthi occupied my mind and kept the inner spiritual urge alive. Throughout my school and college days, I sought their blessings only to bale me out from the worries and cares of the mundane life having neither the thought of the goal of life nor the idea of spiritual attainment. However, as time passed due to the fascination towards religion and God, and my samskaras, I came into the fold of Sahaj Marg philosophy. My elder brother, Shri R. Krishna Murthi, became a preceptor of the system under the noble guidance of Shri Gunde Rao, and Shri Sarnadaji who was in service in Agra. When he came to our native place during holidays he used to tell relatives and friends about the principles of Sahaj Marg. That hadn't much spell on me but I thought that this marg may be one of the galaxy of spiritual paths in India.

In 1968, on the loving invitation of my brother I went to Agra with my father and my brother's friend and his *doddamma.* We were joined by Shri Seshadri, his mother and son. All of us visiting the tourist spots in and around Agra, arrived at Mathura where I had my first sitting in Krishna's birthplace from Shri Seshadri.

My brother wanted us to go to Shahjahanpur after our return from Mathura. He had even sent a packet of 'Agra Petha' sweets and a letter

asking Babuji to give a sitting to my father. We all reached Shahjahanpur at about four PM. Rev. Babuji was not at home, as he had been out for some court work. His eldest son welcomed us warmly and lodged us in one of the rooms. The house, though old, was big and spacious and there were about fifteen other people from various places who had come to have the darshan of Babuji.

At six PM Rev. Babuji returned home. He made affectionate enquiries of us. He saw to all our necessities. My brother's friend's *doddamma* refused to take food in Rev. Babuji's home from him because of his appearance, appearing to be Muslim. Rev. Babuji provided everything to help her with cooking. The same evening at about seven thirty all of us went to Babuji's room and gave him the sweets and my brother's letter. He kept the packet on the table and read the letter. He did not say anything.

I had a strange fear of even seeing Rev. Babuji let alone talking to him. After the lunch and rest Rev. Babuji used to sit in his old fashioned armchair facing the main gate, and we sat in front of him. Because of fear, I used to sit on a chair at the back deliberately out of his direct sight. I entrusted my brother's friend to arrange a sitting for my father from Rev. Babuji.

On the evening of our second day the friend introduced my father to Babuji and begged for a sitting for him. Rev. Babuji, seeing my father said, "He is of my age. Giving sitting won't be of any benefit." I felt scared, for I thought that my father would be miserable for the rest of his life thinking that he was denied a sitting because of his previous sinful acts. Suddenly in my mind I prayed earnestly to Rev. Babuji, "O blessed Master, give him sitting though it won't benefit him, it will at least give him some relief in the evening of his life." Sensing my mental prayer Rev. Babuji said, "Okay, if he is to be profited by my sitting." My joy, knew no bounds when Rev. Babuji's answered, "Yes" to my prayer. I remember this day through all the other days of my life.

One evening two or three of the printing press workers were asking Rev. Babuji about an increase of their wages. He was explaining the financial difficulties. Looking at me, he asked, "Am I not right?" I was too nervous to talk, but I nodded my head.

Another day, I saw Rev. Babuji washing his dhoties pumping water for himself from the well and I was stunned by his simplicity.

I never saw Babuji Maharaj taking meals during our stay in his house. I only ever saw him drinking medicine given by a short man who came to his home regularly. He never asked us why we came or when we were leaving. Such was his noble hospitality. Many times, I felt that Rev. Babuji, sitting in his easy chair, was wandering in far-off worlds.

During 1970, my brother, Shri R. Krishna Murthy, on his way from Agra met with a dreadful road accident near Bellary. He underwent brain surgery in Bellary Government Hospital and was in a coma. The doctors had no hopes. Rev. Babuji was informed by phone. He said that we need not fear, my brother would recover.

We were also in the clutches of financial difficulties and worries. Our father who was alone in our native village was bedridden after hearing about the accident. After a week when we went to the village, my father told us that he had said a tearful prayer to Rev. Babuji begging him to spare the family calamity. It was noon and my father was half-asleep on his side. He told us that somebody touched his shoulders. "I turned and saw Rev. Babuji who said, 'No danger to Krishna Murthy's life. He will slowly recover and so no need to worry over that.' Saying this He left the place." My father was in tears when he told us. We were also crying because the Reverend Babuji whom we had never really taken to our hearts still cared for us, saving and blessing us with His grace. My brother recovered and lived for another twenty-two years.

All these events which I had experienced should have made me embrace and completely surrender to Sahaj Marg. I had been to Shahjahanpur many times to partake in the Basant Panchami celebrations, the participation in which made me vigorous in satsangh and sadhana. But later, like the dog's tail, my mind dropped again into despondency and material pleasures. I shuttled between the world and the spiritual path which unbalanced my life. And then an incident happened to release my soul into Rev. Babuji's kind and graceful keeping: I am working in an aided institution. When the whole country is insanely corrupt, my institution cannot be an exception. After years of long service as a lecturer and later as a vice-principal, I snatched the principal's post. Due to my ego I had to

pay a terrible price. From that day began their effort to dislodge me. When their accusations were proven futile, they embroiled me in a criminal case by involving one of my subordinate staff members. During that short tenure as principal, I had all sorts of tortures, mental; physical, financial, official and legal. Though I came out clear of all their wicked and criminal accusations, I did not have strength to fight against the management. The incident laid me quite bare. At last I voluntarily stepped down from the post and continued in my lecturer's job. Though late, reality dawned on me, and now I cannot swerve from the lap of Rev. Babuji.

When I chew the cud of these memorable experiences I see that my Rev. Babuji is always with me, correcting and counselling, like a fond mother. Now I have reached such a stage that no worldly events bother or affect me. I am experiencing a total quietude now. Closing all the doors of prosperous and progressive material life, Rev. Babuji has kept open the lone door of 'spirituality'.

"Do Good Work Always"

J.R. Doreswamy Iyer, Bangalore, India

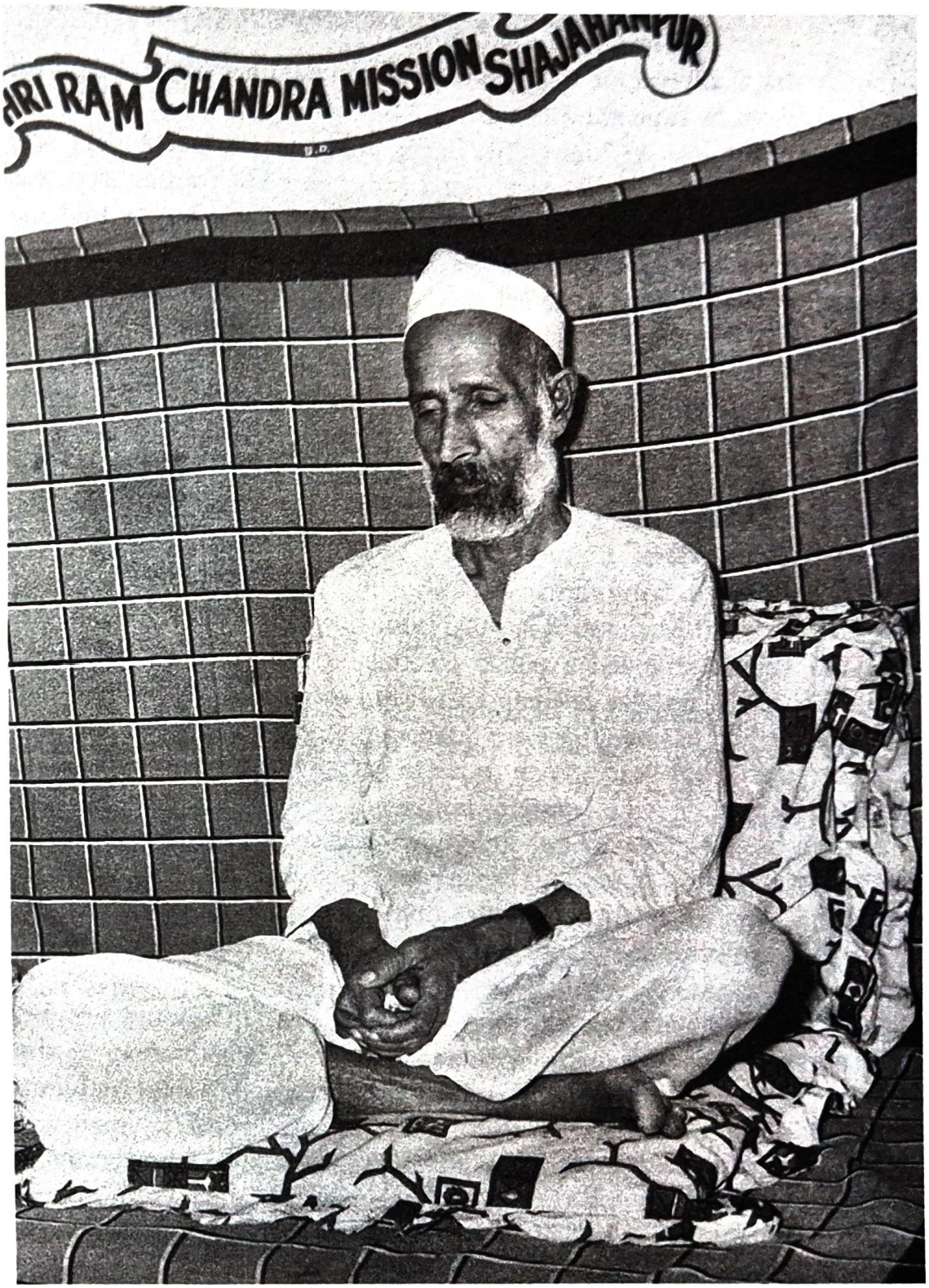
I met Babuji Maharaj for the first time in December 1961 at the house of Shri R. Sheshadri who was a preceptor of Sahaj Marg and my boss.

The next evening, I returned to Shri R. Sheshadri's house to see Babuji, and I started in the system. When Babuji Maharaj left, I cried like a child. I did not realise that for more than twenty years I would be fortunate enough to spend so much time in Babuji's presence and that on several occasions he would stay in my house and I would live with him in Shahjahanpur and elsewhere.

When Shri R. Sheshadri was transferred to Tiruchy there was no preceptor at Bangalore, however upon my third meeting with Babuji Maharaj when he came to Bangalore and stayed in my home, he made me a preceptor. He advised me, "Do good work, always."

In May 1965, I visited Babuji for three days in Lakhmipur Kheri when he took me to a family wedding with him and I was with him for another three days in Kukra village where he taught me how to give group sittings. During a talk, Babuji Maharaj mentioned my name among twelve good abhyasis of the Mission. Later, Babuji Maharaj took me to Shahjahanpur where I stayed in his house for one week before leaving for Delhi. In his presence the worldly life was almost forgotten. Before my departure from Shahjahanpur for Delhi, Babuji gave me a food packet containing chapattis. I took it as prasad and was ever grateful to him. Unexpectedly, I got a chance to be with Babuji again when he arrived soon after me in Delhi and I accompanied him on a bus to see his son-in-law.

And then Babuji visited Bangalore in mid-December 1965 and I went with him to attend the inauguration of the Tirupati Ashram. Again,


HRI RAM CHANDRA MISSION SHAJAHANPUR

Babuji Maharaj advised me to do good work and hammer home the prayer to the abhyasis, by explaining its essence.

In Bangalore in June 1967 Babuji told me, "You are very soft outside, but your heart is like steel," and added that His transmission was bouncing back. I pleaded, "What shall I do, Babuji?" He kindly told me that the hardness of steel was already removed and asked me to do regular practice. I was very grateful to get such a Master. His love, humility and kindness have been ever shining examples throughout my life.

In December 1968, Babuji Maharaj visited Raichur and Master gave me a special sitting in the house of Br. Ramakrishna Rao. I felt that it was a new birth for me. Babuji Maharaj came back to Bangalore and stayed in my house, made Br. B.K. Rajagopal a preceptor for Bangalore and blessed my mother, touching her head with his ring. She passed away six months later and Master liberated her.

I saw him in Bangalore in 1970 and 1972 and in May 1973 before I was transferred to Madurai in Tamil Nadu. On May 1,1977, nearly one thousand people attended a public meeting in the presence of Babuji Maharaj after his birthday celebrations which I conducted at Madurai, and that night Babuji Maharaj gave me a separate sitting and blessed me as a full preceptor. It has been a boon to me to get such a guru in my lifetime and I will be grateful to him until my last breath.

The 81st birthday of Babuji Maharaj was celebrated at New Delhi before his European tour, but Master was not well and one day he conducted satsangh for three minutes only. Those minutes were like an hour and I was lost in meditation and had no body consciousness. It was a memorable sitting in my spiritual life.

During Babuji's last illness in Delhi, by the kind gesture of Br. Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari, I was able to stay in Master's room in the hospital for one hour. This was my last physical darshan of Babuji Maharaj. On April 20, a day after his departure for the brighter world, feeling great sadness, I went to the ashram and offered prayers, "May the great soul of Babuji Maharaj ever shine at the feet of the Almighty Lord."

"I Belong to the Whole World!"

LUCY SCHUBERT DALLA TORRE, NEW YORK, USA

With Babuji's 100th Birthday Celebration approaching, I was asked to write something, possibly, about my thoughts after Babuji's passing. The thought came immediately—how could a Personality of his calibre be confined by our limited concepts of time and space, even if according to the physical laws, the Divine Master left this world in 1983?

Babuji used to say, "I don't belong to India alone. I belong to the whole world." Equally, his existence cannot be limited by the number of years in which he inhabited a human body. Therefore, there is no such concept as 'after Babuji'.

Shri Lalaji Maharaj prayed for a special soul to come among us to do the work required for the change which will take place in this world, regardless of whether people believe in it or not. In *Reality At Dawn*, Babuji wrote, "The new structure of the coming world will stand on bones and ashes."

To do Nature's work has been the main reason for Babuji's presence among us. His work completed, he entered *mahasamadhi*, but by no means could he ever be confined to the past. Babuji simply is.

I had the undeserved and indescribable privilege of meeting him. That experience alone made my present reincarnation worthy, and somehow Babuji Maharaj is more real and alive to me today than when I was sitting next to him under his porch in Shahjahanpur. But what fills my heart with wonder is that truly devoted new abhyasis who never had a chance to be with him can unmistakably detect his presence during sittings. One of them, sceptical in the beginning and about to give up Sahaj Marg, had two powerful experiences that beyond any doubt only confirm that the Divine Master is ever present and constantly working for the spiritual uplift of mankind.

Babuji, my beloved and Divine Master, is forever.

"That Whom You Do Not Know"

PAMELA WINFIELD ROSAR, MANAPAKKAM, INDIA

The first seminar held in Georgia, USA, took place in the summer of 1988. Chariji had come, and everyone was keen to accompany him on the first visit to the plot of land recently purchased for the first North American ashram. There was a holiday atmosphere as we piled into the buses chartered to drive us to the site.

Enough trees had been cleared at the entrance to the property to create a space large enough for Chariji to conduct the first sitting. I was a relatively new abhyasi and had not really developed much sensitivity in terms of feeling anything during sittings, so this one was really remarkable for me, because right from the very beginning, I could feel something special going on. I can only describe it as bliss. There was a sense of consecration, of grace descending, and yes—I dared to think it as I came out of the meditation—of Babuji's presence.

I paid my first visit to Chariji in Madras in early 1988. In those days, Chariji often spent a little time after the early morning sitting having tea with the few abhyasis, mostly from overseas, who did not have to rush off to jobs. During one of these chats, he remarked, "You knew Babuji, didn't you?"

I was feeling sorry and perhaps a bit envious not to have had the good fortune of meeting Babuji. Of course, I had read books and seen photographs. I even drew a portrait for Chariji from a photo of Babuji that I had found particularly sweet. And I had heard lovely stories from abhyasis who had not only met him, but for whom it was not unusual to see him in meditation or dreams. I suppose I regarded him as my Master's Master, a kind of grandfatherly presence, but I did not feel a direct personal connection.

A few years later, a small group of us came together to celebrate Babuji's birthday at the Georgia ashram. Grace flowed, and we were all grateful to have shared this special time. I was staying with a sister abhyasi in a town nearby, basking in the post-seminar glow. I believe it was that first night after the gathering that I dreamt of Babuji. There was no plot, no action and no word, simply him. I cannot explain it, it was beyond any emotional context. But somehow I was so overwhelmed that all I could do was weep. I was actually weeping (and I rarely cry) to the point where I eventually woke up, strangely shattered and deeply moved by this visit, and left to wonder at the mystery of it all.

"Faith is Really the Foundation..."

KOKILA VORA, CALCUTTA, INDIA

I was introduced to Sahaj Marg literature by my sister and took it as part of my reading habit, but was amused with the idea of people finding someone who could take away the burden of life and beyond. I do not recollect the date of that special night when I was asleep around two AM and became aware of a two-in-one figure, not able to recognise their faces. There was an old man with a beard, fragile, maybe a Sufi saint of high calibre and the second one with a strong build holding the man very tenderly and supporting him from the shoulder. This figure of two bent towards a sleeping figure. It was me. I was able to have a momentary glance and experienced a flood of non-illuminating light pouring into my heart. It was a pleasant sensation and ripples woke me astonished and in awe of the whole incident, yet was it a dream? It lasted only seconds but I felt strongly that this could not be merely a dream.

I visited Chariji at his residence, Gayathri, and joined a satsangh there. I found nothing special but the experience for the first time of sitting peacefully for almost thirty-five minutes. I interacted with Chariji for a minute and was ready to leave when I felt a pair of eyes, transparent and moist, holding me till I boarded the auto rickshaw expressing, "Not to go," or "Come back soon."

At last, 'D'-Day came. It was August 7, 1998 and my brother-in-law was leaving the office early to be with Master who was in Calcutta. I felt like joining him. I was at Master's feet and being without awareness, told him that I would like a sitting. He directed me to one of the preceptors.

After some time I was able to establish connection with the light of spirituality which was planted in my dream. A life long journey has started with my Rev. Master to merge with the Ultimate. Nothing more, nothing less.

"Doubt is Poison"

USHA CHITKARA, OHIO, USA

I had doubts about transmission and other things, but in 1994 I was going to Munich to meet Chariji and attend Babuji's birthday celebrations. I was very excited about the whole thing, and at the same time, a little worried about the travel. During that time I had a dream: Babuji, wearing white clothes, was sitting on the floor on a small stage with abhyasis around him all talking and asking questions. I saw Babuji and Chariji walking together, Chariji carrying a walking-stick. As I was wondering about this, I heard my daughter calling, "Babuji from your meditation group is here." I woke up. After that I visited Chariji in Munich and developed full faith in him as my Master. I developed faith in transmission. All the doubts were replaced by love.

"That's All"

DAVID HILL, GALWAY, IRELAND

During meditation, I had an extremely vivid appearance of Babuji before me in the room. I was aware of a chair in front of me with a cushion on it. On the cushion there was a fly, which Babuji shooed off with a wave of his hand. He turned the cushion over, good side up, and motioned me to sit on it, saying that the fly was vain to leave it. That's all of a delightfully warm and charming experience which I have never fathomed. The mystery is appealing enough.

"God is the Real Master"

LAKSHMI PILLALAMARRI, N.J., USA

After I started meditation in 1994, like anybody else, I was struggling to make the connection with the Master. At first I was more attracted to Lalaji and slowly I was able to move my attention toward Babuji. It took more than a year to get the connection with Chariji.

One day I came home from work in the afternoon and had to drive to the post office with a family member who was very late in sending some papers regarding his official matters. On the way we had to stop at a pharmacy to make copies of papers that should have been mailed a couple of months before. I parked the car under a tree near the pharmacy while my relative went in. It was April. I was very upset that he was hurting himself by procrastinating and being careless in his own affairs. How could I change this attitude?

I had tried talking, demanding, encouraging, everything. I did not know what else might work, I was helpless. It is very painful to see someone hurting himself, discarding all the help that is offered and available. A mixture of feelings including anger, pity, pain, guilt and love brought me down to the lowest point. It is very hard to explain that state. One has had to feel it to understand.

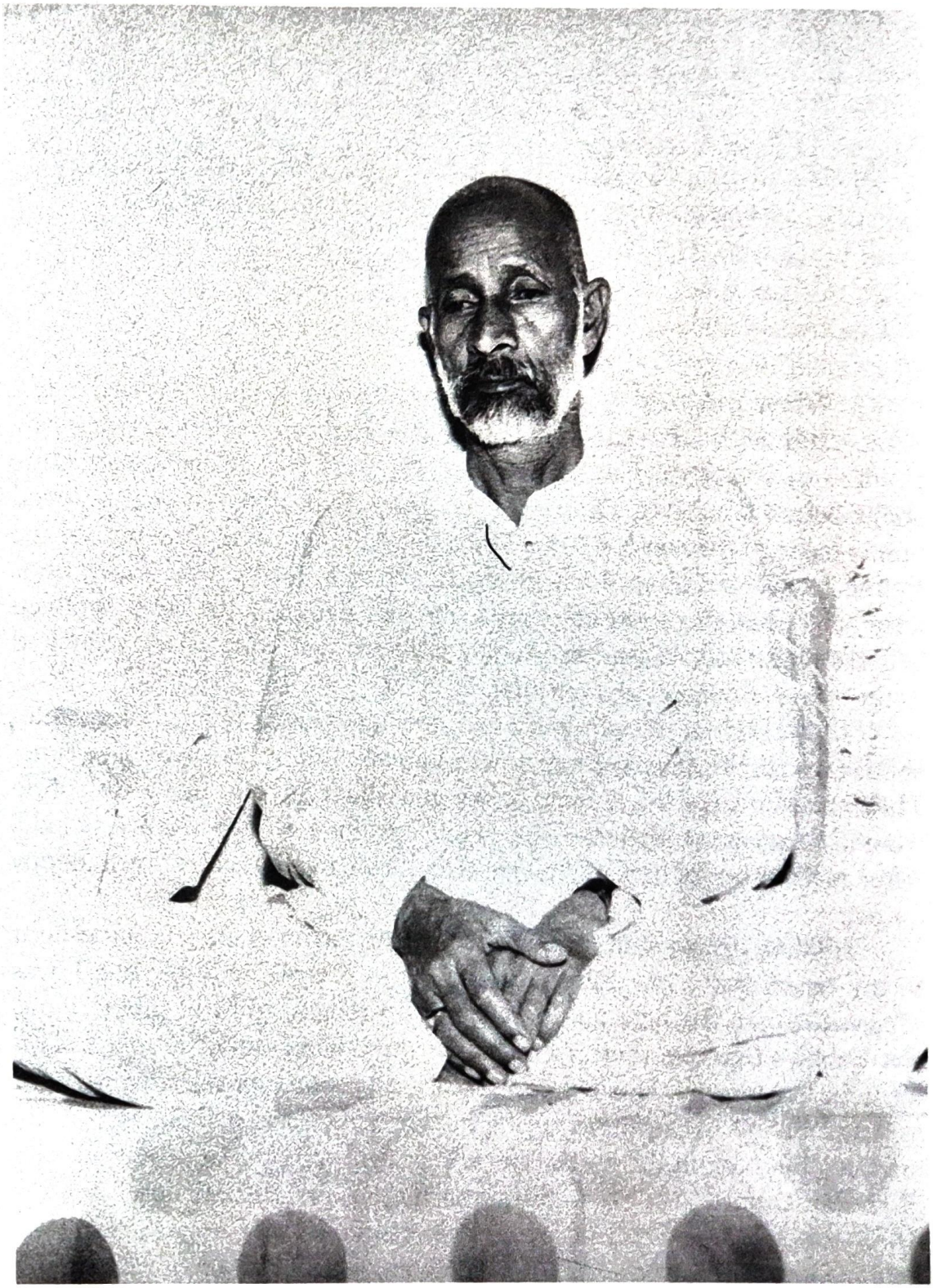
As soon as my relative got down and walked into the pharmacy, I closed my eyes and with my hands folded bent forward on to the steering wheel, supporting my head. Within a minute I was in a deep state and saw a face within two or three inches distance away from my own face, just in front of the windshield. So close were sparkling eyes, straight nose and slight smile on the lips. The nose was so close to my nose, it was the main thing visible to me. It was Babuji Maharaj looking like the photograph of

him on volume one of his autobiography. I could not see his ears, his chin, nor his head.

It was a still, serene moment. My condition changed, filled with peace. No emotions. No feelings. When I came to know that it was Babuji, my mind started saying that maybe I was imagining. But his eyes were looking into my face. His nose was pointing toward my face. His smile washed away the pain. I did not want to open my eyes and even when I came back to my senses I could see those eyes, nose and lips.

Slowly, I opened my eyes, when I heard my relative coming back with his Xerox copies. I could still see Babuji's face even as I drove to the post office. I remained in that state for the rest of the day:

It's not a dream
It's not a personal encounter.
It's not years of relationship
He is Nature itself
He is Life itself
He is existence itself
He is the Reality itself.
So He is present everywhere, for everyone,
At all times.



"With Practice Love Develops Automatically"

MAHALETCHUMY LETCHUMANAN, PETALING JAYA, MALAYSIA

When I started my abhyas in 1981, Sister Kumari showed me a photograph of Babuji and gave me some literature. After settling the children in bed, I used to sit from ten PM until five or six AM, reading about Babuji. I used to hunger for anything at all about Babuji. I loved him, a feeling I'd never felt before. Even by calling it 'love' I'm limiting the feeling I had for Babuji. I was a changed person. My family and friends were amazed by the intensity of my feeling for Babuji; some were annoyed because of the way I talked about him. Babuji surpassed anything they had in the name of religion and spirituality.

My children of eight and nine years knew more about Babuji than about any Hindu deity because it was Babuji I talked about all the time. They knew only the Sahaj Marg prayer and said it at bedtime. With subtle contentment, my mother said, "Someone has done it where I have failed." After reading books in Tamil about Babuji and the system she was happy for me.

When I started my abhyas I used to sit with thought of divine light in my heart, but I saw Babuji's face all the time. Thinking that I was supposed to see the light and not Babuji, I thought again of divine light. But Babuji's face was there again and again, not angry but amused. This went on like a game. Finally I gave up. To my amazement it felt just right to have Babuji in my heart. When I sat for cleaning I could not do anything but bask in the transmission. I thought of Babuji all the time and often daydreamed about him. Sitting in the bus on my hour-long journey to school daily I was only aware of Babuji. I could feel Master near me. Babuji's face was in the space in front of me amidst the blue, purple and

grey hues of mist-like atmosphere. These bus rides were the most satisfying, fulfilling and pleasant moments of my life.

Prior to joining Sahaj Marg, I was lost, tired, restless, alone and hopelessly searching. Everywhere I went I saw strangers. I had an unbearable feeling of being trapped inside myself. With Babuji I felt that which was trapped within me had found a connection. I felt relieved that I belonged. I was at home in my abode with Babuji and it felt just right. Sitting quietly in a corner I used to picture Master in Shahjahanpur in a rural surrounding at dusk, resting in his easy chair with his thoughts far away. I was there in Shahjahanpur with Babuji. The feeling was so intense and real that I am sure Babuji must have felt it, the thoughts, feelings and aspirations of a longing soul.

At the end of 1982, we in Malayasia had made arrangements to visit Shahjahanpur, but the trip was cancelled because he was ill. I looked forward to visiting Babuji when he was better, but my last chance to visit Master went when he left his physical self on April 19, 1983. I was devastated, all the more because I had lost my mother nineteen days earlier.

My family observed the thirty-first day prayer for my mother. About five minutes into the evening prayer I was showered with transmission which went on for quite a while because it lasted until after the prayers. Babuji was there for me even though He had left his physical world just eleven days earlier. Could it have been better if I had visited Babuji in Shahjahanpur?

Now with Babuji and Chariji in one, I could not ask for more.

"I Will be With You for All Eternity"

CHRISTINE JONES, INDIANA, USA

Somehow I was given the blessing of meeting Babuji during his lifetime. Every time I think of those moments it brings tears to my eyes. In Munich, 1980 when I saw him for the first time I was overwhelmed, feeling love, anguish happiness and pain, all emotions at the same time. I don't think it can really be described, so much love poured out of him that I felt I could hardly bear it. I knew that this was a very special human being and that before my eyes was Love.

We were invited to have some private time with Babuji. Ten or so people at a time could go into his room. I wanted to tell him something special, something to let him know what he meant to me. It was then time to leave. As I walked passed him I bent down until our faces were only a few inches apart and I said, "I just want to thank you for You." I looked into his eyes and there was eternity. They went on an on, like the vastness of an ocean. Here was my Master, my teacher and my life.

In Paris 1982 it was different. He was very sick and we did not see him that much. It was so painful to see him that way. One night I was waiting in the corridor for my husband and our friend to come to go to the cafe for coffee. A French abhyasi came and said, "Master is awake, would you like to come and see him?" Well, needless to say, I took off without any concern about my husband or friend wondering where I was. When I walked into the room Babuji was sitting in a chair just gazing into space.

I could not take my eyes off him. There were a couple of others in the room and I was so happy to be there with him. At that moment He began to speak within my heart, "I will be leaving soon." I began to sob and a sort of panic overwhelmed me. I cried out to Him in my heart, "Oh Master, you can't go yet, I'm not ready." I just knew I wasn't going to make

it without him. Then His silent voice spoke again, "I will be with you for all eternity."

When He spoke those words within my heart, a sense of contentment spread within. That moment will remain with me forever, for I realise what a special gift He gave me that night. He took the time to tell me because He knew I had to know. Only He knew where the road might lead if He did not speak. To know that He would never abandon me gave me the strength to go on and never give up. He gave us Himself, He gave us His beloved Chariji. He never really left, He only changed places. Thank you Master, for You.

"Silence is the Language of Sahaj Marg"

B.L. Biswas, New Delhi, India

My eldest Brother R.L. Biswas came to visit us in October 1980 and I explained to him about Sahaj Marg which I had recently joined. On hearing, he immediately agreed to be introduced. We went to Br. Krishnaswamy's house and told him about my brother's interest in joining the Mission. As my brother knew only Bengali, Swamiji could not make any verbal communication with him. So I was asked to explain about the system of sadhana. Swamiji gave him the first sitting and also the subsequent two others. After the first sitting, Swamiji was very much delighted to tell me that my brother's condition was very good and he planned to write a letter to Babuji about his case.

"Silence is the language of Sahaj Marg," said Babuji in response to Swamiji's letter. My brother is too old to move out of the village to travel more than two hundred kilometres to Calcutta to get sittings from a preceptor, but he has been practising the sadhana as advised. He has not seen Babuji physically, remembers him as his guru and mentions his name in all his correspondence. After Babuji's death, I sent him the photograph of our living Master.

I went to Shahjahanpur for three days during October 1981. On arrival there we were told that as Babuji was not well, he was not visiting the ashram and abhyasis were not supposed to visit his house. During those days, as a new abhyasi, I had the habit of taking as many individual sittings as possible. I met a preceptor from Europe who gave me a sitting for about twenty-five minutes. After my sitting was over an abhyasi from Gujarat who did not know English asked me to request the overseas preceptor to give him a sitting too, but after five minutes or so he stopped transmission. Seeing the tears in the eyes of my brother abhyasi I enquired

the reason. The preceptor mentioned that our abhyasi's condition was better than his own. Therefore, the transmission was coming back.

That abhyasi happened to be a very poor man from a village of Gujarat. He had a master before he joined Sahaj Marg who had told him that he would be leaving his physical body soon and would not be able to guide him further, but he should not be worried because his guru would come soon. After the death of his guru he was very sad and waiting eagerly for the arrival of his new guide. He used to sell milk to a preceptor who seeing him very dull and depressed enquired about it. When he learned that the man was disturbed because his guru had not yet come, the preceptor consoled him saying that his guru would be coming soon.

Now, Babuji visited that place and was leaving the preceptor's house where he was introduced to the abhyasi who felt so lost. The abhyasi was then introduced to Sahaj Marg by Babuji and asked to visit Shahjahanpur. As he was too poor to bear the expenses of travel, his fellow villagers collected the money and sent him to meet Babuji Maharaj.

Once Babuji asked the abhyasi sitting near him, "Do you understand the meaning of service and sacrifice?" Abhyasi: "No Sir." Babuji: "Service is to think continuously of the good of others, while sacrifice is not to think of harming others." If our mental conditions become like that we should understand that there has been good spiritual development within.

Sometime in October 1982 Babuji was brought to All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), New Delhi for treatment. As my residence was only a few kilometres away from there, I used to make frequent visits. Many abhyasi brothers and sisters came from far and near to enquire about his health and render service, but the longest and most steadfast services were rendered by Chariji and Sister Sulochanaji. Initially, for a few months they stayed in Br. Chopra's residence, Shahdara, east Delhi far away from AIIMS and then shifted to Br. Kapur's house which is only two or three kilometres away from AIIMS.

Chariji used to come down from Babuji's room during lunchtime and have discussion with abhyasi brothers and sisters about the condition of Babuji's health and Sahaj Marg. I sent a New Year's greeting card to Babuji and Chariji informed me that Babuji had received it.

Months passed but there was no perceptible improvement in Babuji's health and on February 24, 1983, he was transferred from AIIMS to a private nursing home. His condition continued to be the same in spite of our continuous prayer for improvement. On April 19, 1983, Babuji breathed his last at about nine in the morning. His body was kept in a College Building at Saikh Sarai, New Delhi, and all who came to know the sad news, rushed there to have last *darsana* of their dear Master. I felt that strong transmission came continuously through the whole evening. After Chariji's arrival from Chennai, Babuji's body was taken to Shahjahanpur.

"Love Him Who Loves All"

SHRIKANT SHARMA, CALCUTTA, INDIA

When I became an abhyasi and people talked of loving Master I admit it was difficult for me to understand what that love was, and how to love Master.

When I was a young boy, the first girl I met was my true love. But that lasted only until I met the next girl. Again, I thought she was my true love. Some of my friends started saying, "Your true love changes too frequently." So, I never learned what true love was. And when I became an abhyasi, I read the Mission's books and heard abhyasis saying, "Love Master." And then the first time I saw Master in Shahjahanpur, it was love at first sight. I had gone to Basant with a group of abhyasis from Calcutta. Immediately I saw him I felt an attraction as though he was one of my own, someone already known to me.

Later on, I had other occasions to visit Shahjahanpur, on my own. Once, in summertime I went to the ashram and stayed there for about three days, and had to catch an afternoon train home. So, after breakfast, I went to Babuji Maharaj's place to be with Him for about an hour or two. I was there for some time when suddenly Babuji Maharaj asked me, "What time is your train? Do you know the timing of your train? I said, "Yes. It's about the middle of the afternoon." After some time, he again asked me the same question, "You are aware of the timing of your train, isn't it?" "Yes, Babuji," I said that after all, I was a railway officer in India at the time. I couldn't understand why Babuji was asking me this, knowing train times were part of my work.

Anyway, I took leave of Babuji Maharaj round about eleven, went to the station, had something to eat, and decided to take a rest before the

train left at three-thirty PM. It was very hot and I told the rest-house attendant, "Please wake me at the time of the train."

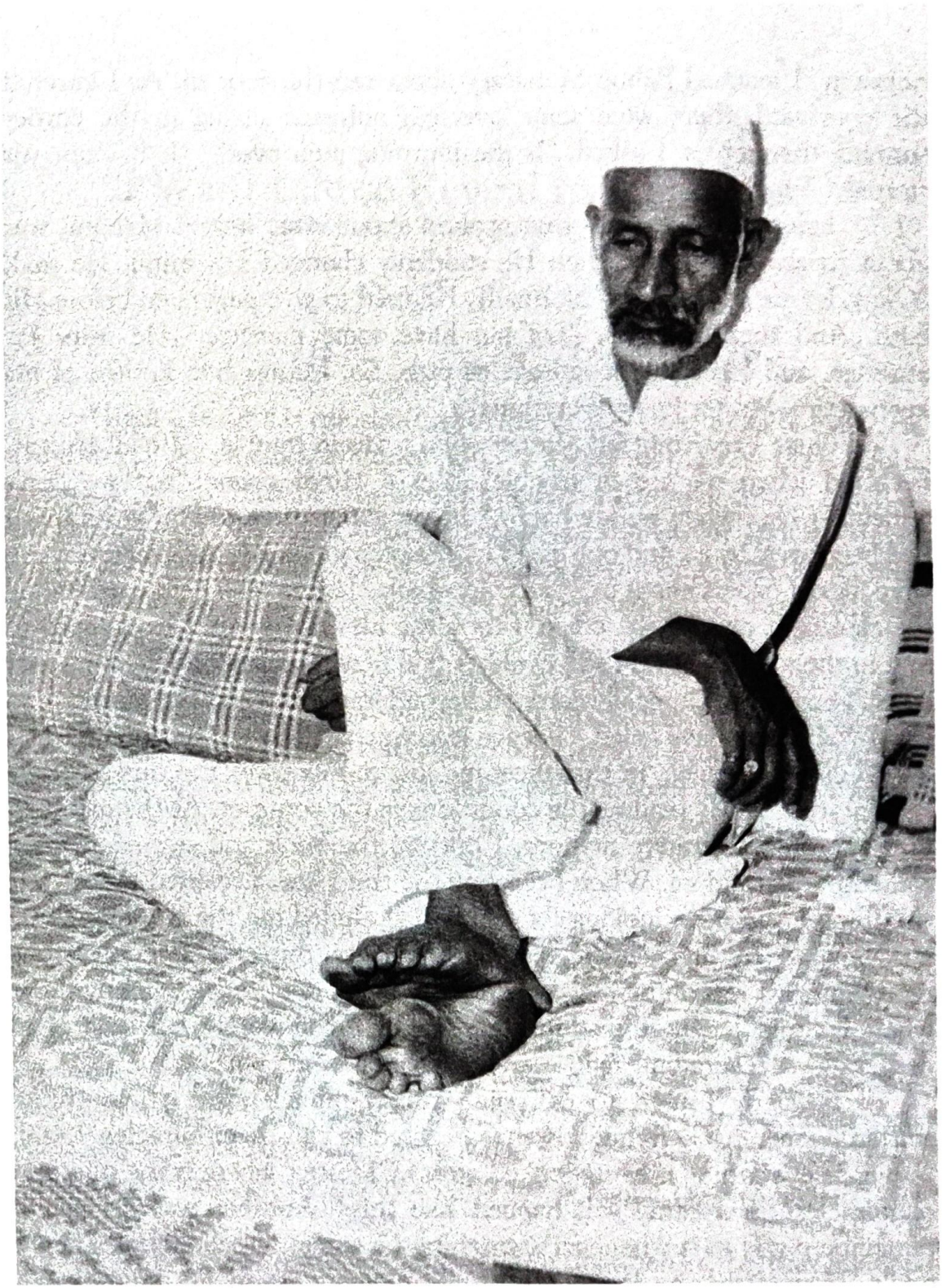
In that heat, I just slept. Round about one fifteen, it was as if somebody shook me, and I was woken up. I got up and looked at the platform, and there was a train. I went out, and found that it was my train. It was supposed to come at 3:30, it was over two hours early. Hurriedly, I picked up my luggage, and I went to the train, and within four or five minutes, it left. And then it dawned on me that Babuji Maharaj had wanted me to be sure of the train timing, and I never paid any attention to his questions. Even at the coming station, I did not check up on the change in timing, and Master had to wake me up, because He knew that this fool would sleep and miss the train.

Another time, I think in winter, I wanted to carry my luggage from the ashram to Babuji Maharaj's place, and go on to catch a train. The night before, I requested Mr. Rao to arrange a rickshaw for me, so that I could reach Babuji's place in time to have the advantage of the puja which normally He gave in the morning. But the rickshaw never turned up. Round about eight, eight thirty, Brother Rao said, "Well, I'm sorry no rickshaw turned up." He sent somebody else, still no rickshaw. Then it was a quarter to nine, and I was becoming desperate, that I would be missing the puja, because I was leaving Shahjahanpur that very day, and I thought, this last puja, I must have it. "I think I missed puja," I said.

I don't know why, but Rao said, "No, I don't think so." I don't know why he said that. Then he said, "Okay, I'll put you in a bus." He waved a hand, no bus stopped. Then there was a bullock cart passing. So he said, "You'd better sit in the bullock cart, go some distance, then you might get a rickshaw."

The bullock cart *wallah* was going to some mill, and I sat in the cart with my bags, and the bullocks were merrily travelling. It became round about nine. So, in the bullock cart, I just closed my eyes and I started praying; it was as if Babuji was giving puja and I was remembering Him, and I was saying, "Okay, Babuji Maharaj, if it is your wish that I have to do puja here, I'll do it."

The bullock cart trip took another thirty minutes or so. The driver said, "You'll get some rickshaw here." And after some time, I got a



rickshaw. I reached Babuji Maharaj's about ten-thirty or so. As I entered the courtyard, there were some overseas abhyasis sitting in the corner sunning themselves. I asked, "Is the morning puja over?" "It has not yet started," someone said.

Later on, I was told that around about nine, Babuji Maharaj was about to give puja. And then He suddenly changed His mind. He said, "Okay, let me go for bath." Normally, He used to give puja even before His bath. And then He said, "Let me have some massage." He went for massage, and I got the advantage of puja. So, Master had known of my keen desire. Master knew everything.

Once I remembered Master when I was in trouble. "We all remember God when we are in trouble" goes a Hindi saying "but we don't remember Him when we are happy." It was about three to four years that I had been an abhyasi, and one day, I had to prepare an arbitration case; there were files of papers about ten years old which I had to read before defending the case next day. In the office, I took the files home and I worked up to four in the morning, and I still couldn't find how to go about defending that point. I could not physically carry on beyond four o'clock in the morning, so I said, "Master, I have failed, I'll leave it to you. Let Thy will be done."

Next morning, in that meeting, just to talk away the time, as they say, I started slowly reading the conditions of the contract. At the meeting, in a very demonstrative manner, I opened the book and started reading something at random. When I reached the third line, I realised that it was the thing I had been looking for which had eluded me the whole night. I was amazed to find myself reading this very thing. The contractor's representative was an ex-chief engineer of mine, and he was slightly upset when I could locate this thing. So where I completely failed, and in desperation accepted my failure, the help came from Him.

Formerly I used to call such things miracles, but these things started happening so frequently that I ceased to call them miracles. I said, "Well, as everything is being looked after by Master, where is the question of miracles? Everything will happen like this." Another way I have of remembering Him is whenever something I want to happen, comes about easily. Now, I feel he looks after every moment, even my breathing is because of Master's grace.

"I Want Life to Reveal its Character"

JYTTE GRAVESEN, COPENHAGAN, DENMARK

"Ram Chandra is transmitting divine energy from India to everyone in the world who meditates under him," a friend told me in 1971. To be honest I laughed, thinking this should be taken with more than a pinch of salt. But my heart was wiser than my reasoning, and I went with my friend to an Indian preceptor living in Copenhagen at the time to have my first sitting. When the sitting was over I was so light and happy, that I felt like dancing along the pavement.

A few weeks later I saw Babuji for the first time on the cover of a book when I visited the person who had introduced me to Sahaj Marg. We were talking when suddenly I noticed the book on the table. The picture was drawing my attention like a magnet, and for some moments I forgot myself and where I was, it seemed to glow or radiate what in my mind I had to call divine light. The feeling that I had met the person was very strong.

These are some of my memories of Babuji: Once in Shahjahanpur I was sitting among a group in the meditation hall waiting for Babuji to come and give a sitting. In the meditation I was lost as if "I" had completely dissolved. Then the narrow space of "I" was felt again, until it disappeared once more. This repeated itself several times in a time dimension where it was impossible to say if lifetimes or just seconds passed by. Suddenly I noticed a vision, which had maybe been there all the time: It was a wheel turned by Babuji's hand at the same pace as the "I" was coming and going.

One evening I asked Babuji, "What is digestion of the transmission you give us?" He said, "It is to make it part and parcel of yourselves, to absorb it." Rolf asked, "How to do this?" Babuji said, "By love, love for

God." Then Babuji told us of his dependency on Lalaji, "I cannot live without my Master, but he cannot display without me," and he was laughing saying, "This is foolishness." "Godly foolishness," I said, and he laughed more and said, "You can also say it is divine awareness." I said, "Babuji, love is that feeling of reality?" Babuji replied, "No, it is the way to reality." Long silence. He continued, "I want life to reveal its character."

At a public meeting in 1972 in Copenhagen I was to speak after Chariji. I was completely inexperienced in speaking and now I had the problem that I had prepared myself to speak with the same idea as his. When I was called to the microphone, I was on the point of fainting, being barely able to walk or even stand up, and not knowing what to say. Then Babuji came to my rescue. He was sitting quietly in his easy chair at the back of the stage. Suddenly I felt that he pulled me up and put me into a condition so that I was able to tell people very simply from my heart, how much it meant to me to practise Sahaj Marg. I felt very happy and cheerful doing this. Babuji simply made me able to be myself without the straight-jacket of fear that had paralysed my mind and made my body feel like jelly. This happened in front of so many people, but who saw it? Only those who could 'read' as Babuji called it.

I was sitting in the meditation hall in Shahjahanpur trying to clean myself, but I was overwhelmed by the feeling that I would not be able to handle my material duties in a satisfying way. It was evening and we were not allowed to go to Babuji's house, but I felt so bad that I got up and hurried all the way to him. Babuji was sitting outside in the courtyard with a number of Indian abhyasis and family members. I didn't know what to do, but someone made me sit on a cot and asked me what was the matter. I was crying and unable to explain.

A little later one of the abhyasis came over and said to me, "Babuji says that bringing up children in Denmark is the same as in India." After a few minutes wondering about what he had said, I realised that Babuji had seen my trouble. I looked at him. He was talking with the abhyasis as if everything was normal, and after a while I felt quite normal myself. I said good night and thank you to Babuji and went back to the ashram.

On another visit to Shahjahanpur, Babuji kept saying that people who came to him only wanted peace when he was able to give them

realisation. In the beginning I just listened to it as general information, but soon I started to get irritated, as I became aware that the treatment was meant for me. I went through all sorts of emotions, thinking he didn't understand me, or that I wasn't worth anything. He kept boiling me for days until I was ready to go and shake him and tell him I wanted realisation and nothing less. At that point he removed the whole thing and looking very pleased saying, "Now you have gained an almost saintly condition. You should now try to keep it." I felt so balanced, that although I felt very grateful to him, I didn't feel any excitement at all by hearing that the condition was almost saintly.

I was pregnant in 1974 when I went to Shahjahanpur. There was a strike on the railway and due to a Muslim holiday it was impossible to get a taxi to Delhi to reach our flight home. I was worried about going to Delhi by bus, because the seats were so hard and the roads so bumpy. I had taken the risk of going to India in that condition to see Master, but I didn't like the idea of troubling Babuji unnecessarily. Nevertheless the day before leaving, I realised that I was so worried, that I had to tell him. He too tried to arrange for a taxi, but the message was that it was impossible. He had removed my worry, for I was conscious of the fact that he would feel responsible for getting me home safe.

After we said good-bye to Babuji we went by rickshaw to the bus station. Just as I was putting my foot on the step of the bus to enter it, Kashiram, the preceptor of Shahjahanpur, suddenly appeared with the message that a taxi was ready to take us to Delhi. I gave birth less than one month after I got home.

"What Will You Do?"

A. BALASUBRAMANIAM, SINGAPORE

It was a Sunday evening in June 1979 and after dinner I sat with my father watching an American television program called 'Championship Wrestling.' When it ended my father went to sleep and I continued to watch TV till around midnight. Afterwards, I went to sit on my bed to do the evening cleaning. Somehow I found I could not continue as I felt myself move into another dimension. Suddenly I saw the silhouette of Babuji Maharaj standing behind what appeared to be a very thin curtain. He asked, "What will you do when your father dies?" My father was in good health for a seventy-five year old. As I heard this unexpected question from the Master I became panicky. And when He repeated the question, I said, "I will ask K.V. Reddy." "K.V. Reddy will be late," Babuji said.

I panicked even more and as the exchanges between us ended Babuji came towards me and we sort of merged. And the rest of the 'conversation'–instructions for the days to follow–came to me from within so that I knew what to expect and what I should do. After that, enormous transmission started flowing into me in the form of concentric circles. I continued to be filled with this mounting energy until a point when I felt myself to be drowned at the bottom of the ocean. After this inner encounter with the Master I came out with a new condition, and from sitting I fell flat back on the bed and must have fallen asleep.

I opened my eyes at five thirty or so the next morning but did not get up as it was Sunday. I lay there, tossing and turning around while recalling the events of the night and hearing my father busy in the next room. Around six the phone rang. It was K.V. Reddy phoning from the airport of Kuala Lumpur, saying that he was coming to Singapore and

would be free around ten AM. We agreed to meet at Baldy's Shop. I walked back to my bed thinking that I must remember to tell K.V. Reddy about the night's experience.

About forty-five minutes later my father started to have breathing problems. We called an ambulance which took him to the local hospital where he was admitted and treated for a heart attack. My whole family was there. Acting as though a stranger to myself, guided by an inner stability from which the usual human emotions at such a moment seem to be absent, I gave my two brothers instructions to take care of my mother, told a family friend to take care of the funeral arrangements. Then, I went and sat on a bench outside the ward where my father was being treated and I started to transmit to him as instructed by Babuji the previous night. I continued to do so until the transmission was absorbed and I only stopped when it came bouncing back. About twenty minutes later the doctor came to tell me that my father had passed away and offered his condolences.

I noticed that it was almost ten in the morning and time to meet with Reddy. So I rang our mutual friend who owned Baldy's Shop and told him that I could not meet Reddy because of my father's sudden demise. I put the phone down and only then remembered Babuji's warning that "K.V. Reddy would be late." It was much later that I realised that Babuji had prepared me to have the attitude and strength to do the necessary work for my father because by His grace He detached me from the normal emotional turmoil of losing my father. Many years later I understood the boundless generosity and abundant graciousness of the Master when I discovered, in *The Letters of the Master*, that Babuji had told Dr. K.C. Varadachari that if transmission was given to a person at the moment of death the soul was granted liberation. How could I have been motivated to do that for my father if the possibility was unknown to me and I did not know how to do it.

After three days in the Master's embrace, unaffected by what had occurred I was suddenly overcome by grief. I broke down and cried on the bed where the sweet support of the gentlest of Masters had begun.

"The Real Cry of the Painful Heart..."

AMAL MCWHORTER, CALIFORNIA, USA

For so long, I was blind and deaf to the messages that Babuji was sending me. Perhaps I was searching for something without knowing what. In India, one has a lot of scope to do this, because there are hundreds of beliefs, so confusing. Things came into my life like toys. For a few years I played sitar just to forget myself and what I wanted. And one day I just dropped it. Then for years I went trekking in the Himalayas for maybe three months. I desperately wanted to find something which could have a lasting hold on me. Nothing held me. And my search became pretty frantic.

I was a member of a large group of trekkers and we used to make the best of any few days holiday we got and go somewhere out of Bombay. Then, when I was at Kanpur, I went to Bithur with a few friends who wanted to show me some small place of religious importance. We went for a few miles on bicycles and it was pretty tiring but my friends were enthusiastic about showing me where Sita lived while she was in the forest, where Dhruva made penance, and more. My ears were there, my eyes were there, but not my heart. When we got back, tired, my friends ate and went to sleep. And I realised the distance between what I had seen and my inner self.

All those years, I experienced confusion, frustration, disappointment whenever I went and found nothing. I searched ashrams and temples. I even lived in some of the ashrams. Learning hatha yoga I lived in one ashram for eight months. At that stage I thought, okay I'm happy here, maybe I'll resign from my office and stay here. But I saw the swamis fighting with each other. It was so bad, even ordinary people would not

fight like that and I knew that I should not stay there anymore. So I withdrew my resignation.

Now, after that trip to the holy places while my friends were having a nap, I got up and went again to all those places and got back before they woke up. And then in my frustration I seemed to lose control. I started crying loudly, not caring that I was spoiling everybody's day and I insisted on going home. It was a bad show.

Around that time, one of my friends took me to the Rama Krishna Mission. He sat down in front of me and said, "Let's try to meditate." "I don't know how to meditate," I said. And then I agreed to sit down with him and meditate. I didn't know what meditation was and my mind just searched for things outside. I returned to Bombay determined that I would never, never go in search of what people call God again. I would not read any literature about religion and I would not go to temples or ashrams. I did not do so for a long time.

Probably that outburst of mine reached Babuji. Eventually, I remembered that when I used to go mountaineering I had met a Brigadier Gansigh who was an abhyasi of Sahaj Marg. He had tried to persuade me that it would be good for me but I didn't take it seriously, saying, "Brigadier, maybe next time I come, I'll listen to you..." Again and again, he reminded me. And I said, "No, sorry," always a deaf ear to what he was telling.

After more resistance and further persuasion I eventually tried the sittings. Well, that is the background. I do not know exactly which point brought me to Babuji, except that the culmination of it all was my outburst at that small place. In the end, or the beginning, I didn't even try to find out who Babuji was, only one question I asked the preceptor, "I feel meditation is something within, and I don't believe somebody else can teach me."

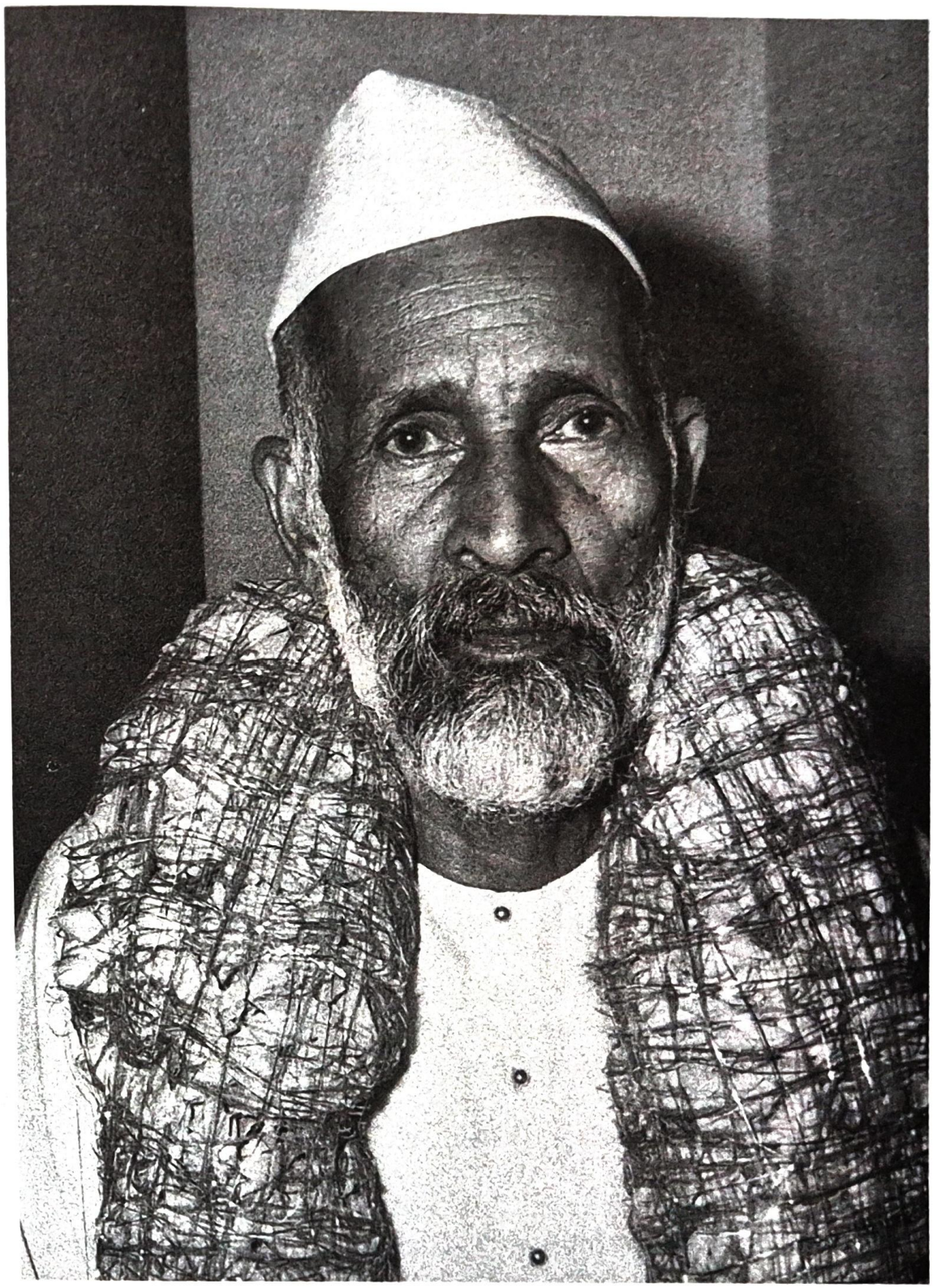
The preceptor replied, "The milk is with everybody, and if one wants to make yoghurt out of it, somebody has to add a little yoghurt to culture it and that is how most probably the preceptors in this Mission do." "Yeah," I said," I can try it." The preceptor also convinced me to visit Shahjahanpur for Basant on my way to Assam where I had promised to set up a library in another ashram. And so I went to Shahjahanpur soon after I

started. I did not feel any miraculous change in me during the three days but when I prepared to go back something had changed in me and instead of going to that ashram, I went back to Bombay. Except for one occasion when I had to fulfil a promise to the people of that ashram I never went anywhere except Sahaj Marg.

Then Babuji came to Bombay on his way to South Africa. We would go and sit with him and he would not talk much. I was at the back behind most people, a little nervous to face him and he suddenly asked me my name. I was confused and nervous but I went and told my name. He said, "Okay, you can go now."

Then came Guru Purnima, the day in India when we worship Masters. If you are learning music, for instance, you are supposed to offer something to your music master. So friends asked, "Don't you have anything special today in the Mission on Guru Purnima to offer something to your Master?" "In our Mission," I said, "every day is special; we do meditation in the morning, we do cleaning in the evening, we do prayer too at night," and I thought, "I wish I was with Babuji." It was just a thought, and then I forgot it. And when I went to bed that whole night Babuji was sitting in front of me. "You are sleeping," he said, "I thought you wanted to have transmission. You wanted to have sitting from me, get up, I'll give you sitting." I think that sitting went all night. He was sitting in front of me. I was sitting and he was giving the sitting. The physical changes that took place during that time are so distinct even today that it is hard for me to imagine it was a dream. In the morning, instead of going to work, I went to my preceptor and told what had happened. Before that, I did not think very seriously about Babuji but that thought in the day time, that wish that I was with Babuji had brought him to me in the night.

I remember that Babuji was going to his birthday celebration on April 30, 1982. We abhyasis were supposed to receive him at the airport and then see him off in the train to Surat. I decided that it was so hot in Bombay that I would carry some fruit juice for Master. By the time I reached the airport I was slightly late. Babuji had already arrived. He was right in front of me and my preceptor was standing next to him. "I am carrying fruit juice for Babuji," I said. The preceptor said, "The car is right there, Babuji is there, why don't you offer him?" I couldn't do that and



said, "Don't speak too loudly, he will hear it. I cannot do that." The car carrying Babuji left and came back because the abhyasi driving had taken a wrong turn. One more time, it came back. I had no guts to offer juice. The preceptor said that there was room in the car, to get in, but I could not so he drove off with Babuji. I reached the train station and Babuji was sitting here with abhyasis around him. It was very hot and someone was fanning him. He said that he was thirsty and would like to have something to drink. Abhyasis started running around to get something for him and everybody felt guilty at not having water for him. Quietly, I said, "I am carrying this juice if he likes to have it." And I heard Babuji say, "Yes, I want it."

When the train came and Babuji got in, the preceptor said, "At least now you can give that. I was asking for that juice and you were holding it for Babuji and were not offering it to him, neither would you give it to us to use as prasad." "Now you take," I said, "I carried it for Babuji and he has had a couple of sips of it. Now you can carry it."

Adapted from a talk.

"Connect Again and Again"

KAMLESH PATEL, NEW YORK, USA

It is twenty-two years since I was introduced to Sahaj Marg in Ahmedabad. Experiences of other abhyasis tempted me to visit Master right away, but I couldn't go until after my exams. Then I travelled by train with an abhyasi brother, crowded into one corner with about twenty-five people in the same compartment. And from Delhi to Shahjahanpur it was the same, standing all the time, often on one leg. Of course it was painful but there was also such a longing to see Him.

The moment before getting out of the train and stepping on the platform at Shahjahanpur, felt like floating on clouds. I remember that we didn't even have to find the Shri Ram Chandra Ashram ourselves. Abhyasis saw our badges, and said, "Let's go there." We passed Babuji's house. We didn't go in but the driver said, "Here is the place, and we're picking you up from the ashram tomorrow." I felt so excited hearing that here is Babuji's house that the tiredness was all forgotten. At the ashram we went to sleep on the terrace where it was windy, because there were so many mosquitoes.

"Seeing you young people, Master will be very happy," our preceptor in Ahmedabad had said. But when we went to see Babuji the next morning he didn't even look at us and I felt hugely disappointed because I was expecting him to come out and listen to us and we just sat there waiting and he didn't talk for three days. But still there was a kind of happiness, of bliss in waiting.

Someone in the ashram said, "Here are some young people, so Master will come to the ashram, but He didn't come. He was sick. On the last day of our visit to Shahjahanpur, we just saw Master at about nine o'clock and we were seated on a couch far from His seat. An abhyasi went

to Master telling Him we had brought some *prasad*. During that period Master said about me, "Tell that young boy to eat lots of butter." That made me really happy because he had never even talked with me and yet he noticed my physical condition. So I took butter, even in coffee I used to have butter. And a few years later I discovered that the medication I was on was absorbed better in the body with butter. Eventually I lost the taste for butter.

Departure was very hard I could not stop crying all the way to Delhi. Even during sleep I cried.

It was 1980, the April 30th Celebration was going on in Bangalore and I had a love affair with a girl. I was finishing my M.S. It was the last of my annual exams. So I went to the ladies' hostel and asked her to marry me. She said, "I can't do it." That was very hard to accept, you know. I was almost on the verge of collapse. I didn't know what to do. Next day I had my last pharmacology test. I was sort of panicking. I chose to go to our group sitting. After I explained to our preceptor what had happened that evening, she said, "Don't worry. Go back to your hostel and sleep. Don't study." I was the only one who did any good in the test. I got a university gold medal.

The next visit to Shahjahanpur was in 1981. Again the preceptor from Ahmedabad said, "This time Babuji will be very happy. There are seven or eight abhyasis, and all of them are from between eighteen to twenty-three or so." We went to Babuji's house again in the morning. Entering his gate I bowed down in my heart; I didn't do a physical "*namaste*." Sitting with his hands over his head I was surprised that he responded. He saw my heart. While departing, I just bowed down and touched his feet and he caught me and supported me to stand up, "Be happy," he said smiling. It was such a nice thing. Now I use those blessings in different ways; when I get into trouble, I just remind my Master, "How you said this, and how I am in this condition?" Or, "You said 'Be happy,' and now I'm like this?" Immediately it goes away. It's very shameful, you know.

Again there came an opportunity of working in Surat for Master's birthday celebration. I was there four months preparing for the function, but it was impossible to stay any longer. I tried to stay, but I could not

because my wife was already in the USA and kept complaining to my father that, "He's not coming over here." So my father forced me to go home. I was depressed that after all the preparation I was not able to attend his birthday celebration. I used to weep whenever I remembered that I couldn't visit him during his birthday because of no money to go back from the US to India.

I was then at the Chicago Medical Centre. One day a doctor came to me, "Mr. Patel," he said, "let me know when somebody goes to India. I have to send my daughter." She was about six, seven months. Her parents being doctors could not take care of their child. So they were sending their daughter to India to her grandparents. He ended up by saying, "Whoever takes my daughter, I'll give half the air fare." "Then I am going for you," I said. I didn't even let my parents know, I just arrived there.

It was a hectic period. One day I had an accident in Surat. I was on a scooter taking Brother Raizada on the back seat. I ran into a rickshaw but there was only a small injury to my hand. We didn't tell Babuji what happened, but that night I was lying down on the sofa, many abhyasis were there and Babuji asked, "Who had an accident today?" No one knew. Then he came and brought me up, and started massaging my sore hand rotating his finger on it until the pain went away. I still have a little scar.

On another occasion I travelled with Master and so many things happened; for example, because of stormy weather the route of a flight from Ahmedabad to Delhi was suddenly changed. We sat in the plane at Ahmedabad. Master wanted to smoke. We didn't have any cigarettes, and there was a 'No Smoking' sign in the plane. We asked the air hostess, could our Master smoke? "Don't you see there is a no smoking sign?" she asked. "All right, all right," we said. After a while that 'No Smoking' vanished, I don't know how, and Master pointed out, "There is no sign up there." But we didn't have a cigarette, so we got one from the back of the plane and a lighter from the front, and lit it up for Him. The hostess came, "You can't smoke here!" "Look there is no sign now," we said. She went away.

Once we were on a train from Delhi to Shahjahanpur. While nearing Bareilly, Master asked Brother Kashi Ram, "Which is the next station?" Kashi Ram said, "Babuji, Bareilly is coming." Master laughed.

"*Bevkoof*," (idiot) he said, "Is Bareilly coming to us? No, we are going to Bareilly." I think that joke conveys that the goal does not come to us. We have to reach there.

That year I asked how to progress faster. He said, "Constant remembrance." Then I asked how to do that. He said, "Connect again and again."

An abhyasi was greatly affected by a severe earthquake in China in which many thousands lost their lives. He asked Babuji the age-old question, "How can a loving God countenance such suffering?" Babuji made no answer that day, nor the next, but two days later, when the abhyasis had forgotten the question, Master reminded him, "Do you remember you asked me a question?" "Yes." The answer came, "Nature demanded; Lalaji requested; power was utilised."

Master wanted to see the sea, and there was none nearby. We took him to see the riverside. There Babuji just walked around, and sat on a chair, smoking one cigarette after another, and he used to give me all the butts. Two I put out in front of him, and the third I held and thought, let me take it away behind a tree and smoke it, because I wanted to smoke his last cigarette butt, but he knew my intention, he said, "Here!" Pointing the finger in front of me. I had to put it out right away.

Adapted from a talk in New Jersey in 1986.

"Love is the Hunger..."

B.K. RAJAGOPAL, BANGALORE, INDIA

I was in Madurai during 1967 and was a sales executive. I used to travel a lot and this gave me ample chance to visit so many temples in Tamil Nadu. While in station, I used to visit Meenakshi Temple and many other temples every day and do traditional puja or *perumal aradhana* regularly. Internally I felt restlessness and was visiting a number of swamijis and sadhus in search of meaning to life.

It was during one of our business meetings that I met beloved Chariji who was chief executive of a firm. Our conversation somehow drifted to religion and traditional worship, temples, etc. It was at this point, Chariji mentioned about his Guru whom he called 'Master'. He invited me to meet him, as fortunately in two month's time he was due to visit Madurai. I readily agreed.

Master arrived by the end of December 1967. Chariji, true to his promise informed me about the visit well in advance. Master stayed in a place called Gayathri Bhavan along with his party. I went to have his darshan. When I first saw him, I was totally disappointed and upset. I wondered what spirituality this weak and cigarette smoking Muslim-like man could give, because I was brought up in a traditional Vaishnava family and all these things were considered irreligious and even objectionable.

Chariji asked me whether I would like to have a sitting. For the sake of courtesy both with a lot of confused thoughts I nodded my head. Chariji took me to another person, a preceptor. This man was equally unimpressive. I came to know he was Shri Narayan Sahai who was a close associate of Master's. He gave me a sitting and asked me how I felt. I said that I felt nothing and was also uncomfortable throughout the sitting. This was reported to Chariji who asked me to join him for a sitting after a while.

I still felt nothing much to the annoyance of Chariji. He requested me to follow him into Master's room and narrated the whole thing. Master immediately directed Chariji to bring me to satsangh at seven AM next day.

I was present for the satsangh the following morning and was told to sit in front of Master. I did this though even though I felt I had obliged Chariji and his Master enough and I would not budge any further.

The satsangh started. Within five minutes I found a brilliant light within my heart and there I saw the laughing form of Babuji. I closed my eyes to find the experience repeating. Again I opened my eyes which resulted in losing the experience of a lifetime.

After satsangh I was asked by Chariji to go with him in the car taking Babuji to his place. I sat in the back seat with Chariji leaving the front seat to Babuji. During the journey, Babuji Maharaj exclaimed, "Look Parthasarathi, your friend, how many idols he has been praying! Everything is gone completely now and he is very pure in his heart." My beloved Master had cleared all my wrong worshipful practices at one stroke. We left Babuji at his place. I stayed there for some time. Silently in my heart, I prayed for his forgiveness and to grant me His grace to make me one with him. It was then I realised that the Master, whom I was searching for, had come in his infinite mercy, knocking at my heart.

"You Go and Look Again"

SIRAM CHIRANJEEVI, TEXAS, USA

From the age of seven or eight I used to pray to Shri Rama and my goal was to build a temple to him when I grew up. My parents died by the time I was twenty and after I completed my studies I had to go to another state. My father used to do Ramjapa at Shri Rama's shrine morning and evening so when the time came to leave my hometown, I thought I should take that shrine with me. I thought about it for a few days, and something told me that the idol was not God, and I did not take it with me.

So I left it there and went to Poona where I worked for two years before getting a job in Bombay. I worked there for five years and in 1964 got a scholarship to the US. Before leaving I thought of visiting Lord Venkateswar's shrine in Tirupati and from there I was going to my hometown before leaving the country. Brother Swami is a relative of mine, and my wife and child and I went to his house. On the third day there early in the morning we went to the temple. I had to wait two or three hours in line at the shrine and all the time I was weeping. When my turn came to see the shrine I don't think I even looked, just prayed God to merge me in Him. When finally we went home to Dr. Swami's house, he told me he was an abhyasi of this system and asked me, "Are you interested?" "Yes," I said, and that is how I came to be introduced to Sahaj Marg in 1964 by Dr. K.C. Varadachari in Tirupati. A couple of months later I left for studies in chemistry in the USA. I was irregular with my practice of meditation but slowly, I became less so and started feeling more and more effect of the transmission, and peace. I had no individual sittings until 1971, when brother K.C. Narayana, sponsored by The Rotary Club, came to The USA.

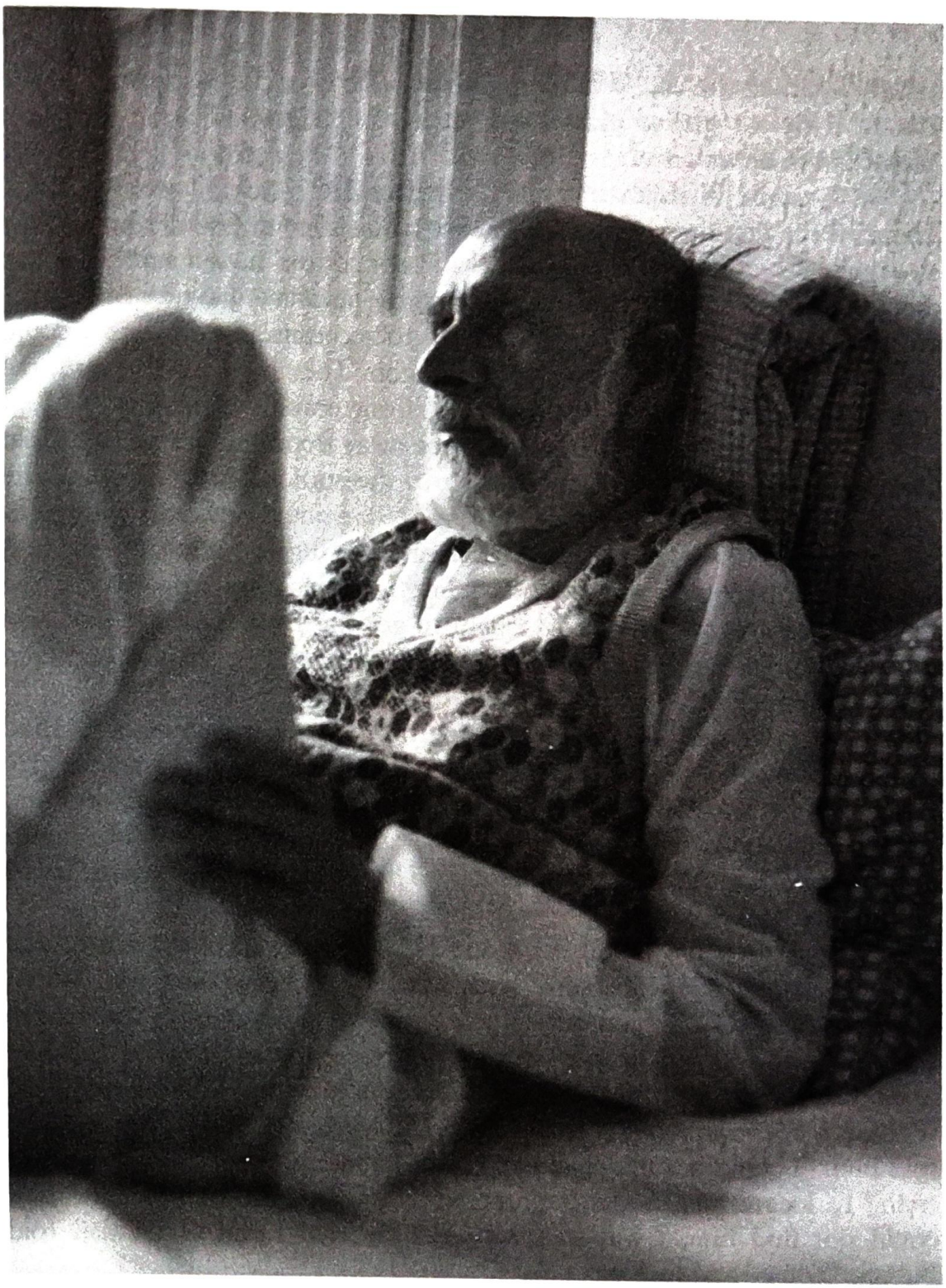
I had never met Babuji although He made me a preceptor on January 1, 1972, when I received a letter from him along with the certificate. For the first time, I met Babuji Maharaj in the summer of that year in Washington DC when, accompanied by Chariji, he visited America. Dr. R. Singh and I went to the airport and received them and drove to Singh's apartment.

We had lunch and Babuji rested on a bed, lying on his side with curled up legs. Chariji lay on his back on the carpet and I was sitting next to him facing Babuji who had his head turned away from me. I was meditating and tears were coming out of my eyes. I am ashamed to say this, but I was praying to Lalaji Maharaj to tell Babuji to help me spiritually. All of a sudden Babuji woke up Chariji and told him in Hindi what I was doing. Indeed I was a fool to pray to Lalaji when the living Master was in front of me.

Later, Babuji gave a sitting to me and my wife after which he told my wife that she did not have a sense of smell. My wife confirmed this. Then Babuji looked at me and said in Hindi, "I will not tell you," and took Chariji inside and told the reason. Babuji also told my wife that the scar on the left side of her face was caused by a fall in her childhood. It had resulted in damage to a nerve and advised her to consult a doctor. Babuji said not to tell the doctor a spiritual person had indicated this.

After a day or two we went out to see around Washington. Chariji, my wife and two daughters were in my car, Babuji and Dr. Singh and his family in another car. First, we set out for the White House. I had no map of Washington and I got lost. By the time we found the White House Babuji had completed his tour and was outside, waiting for us. He was concerned about me because I was new to Washington.

When the day for Babuji's departure arrived, we decided to see them off at J.F. Kennedy Airport. Recalling his trip with me to the White House, Chariji refused to ride in my car because he did not want to miss the plane. I followed Dr. Singh's car but lost it and I had no idea where JFK airport was and I did not even know by which airline they were flying. Somehow, we got to the airport and I drove through the parking lots of several airlines until my wife complained that I was not parking in any of them. I kept on driving and eventually found myself pulling into a space



where I parked the car. When we got out, Babuji and others were getting out of their car parked close by. I could not believe my eyes and tears rolled out in abundance.

I visited Shahjahanpur in December 1977 when I went back to India for the first time since I left in 1964 and stayed at Babuji's home for a few days. When I was leaving him I could not control myself and burst into weeping, but somehow got myself into a cycle rickshaw. Babuji came to the rickshaw and told the fellow to take me to a certain place where I could buy a train ticket before getting to the station. Then he turned towards me and in Hindi, told me to note down the railway porter's number.

When we had gone some distance away from Babuji's house, I told the rickshaw driver to take me straight to the station. At the station, the train had arrived and the gate was closed so we could not cross the tracks to get to the entrance of the station. I gave my luggage to the porter and asked him to wait on the platform while I crossed the bridge to get the ticket. I had to cross the bridge again to get the Delhi train. It was very crowded but I found the porter and boarded the train. As soon as I entered the train, it took off.

When I had settled for the journey, I pondered over what had happened, and I felt very ashamed for not following Babuji's advice. He knew exactly what was going to happen. My air ticket, passport, and travellers' cheques were all in my suitcase and in spite of my disobedience Babuji had taken care of me completely. This illustrates how Master cared in spite of undeservingness.

Babuji has helped all of us, and He is helping all of us. We do not know how long our association with Master has been going on. When Chariji came to Texas and stayed a few days at my home, on the way to the airport to pick up brother Murthy of Mysore, I mentioned that I had read that Babuji was Patanjali in one of His previous lives about three thousand years ago. Chariji said, "Yes, that is true." It seems Babuji once told him, "I could not understand some of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras so I was trying to locate him in the brighter world and get some clarifications. I could not find him. I was so surprised." He told Lalaji and Lalaji told Babuji, "You go and look again."

Babuji said, "I went and looked and I didn't find, and I asked again of Lalaji. Then He said, 'Look inside yourself.'" And that is how he found out that He was Patanjali. Then Chariji added that even at that time he was a *chela* of Babuji's. So we do not know how long our past impressions have been bringing us to this path.

Adapted from a talk given in Texas, 1986.

"God is Simple"

LONE GREN LARSEN, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Around the time of my graduation in 1972, as a girl of nineteen, I made a big collage with cuttings from magazines and newspapers. The theme of the collage was Western countries with their over production and consumption of food and their suppression of the people of the rest of the world through imperialism, wars (Vietnam) and economics. Two American capitalists had their portrait cut out for this collage, and for some reason I also cut out the picture of a guru from India with the word 'meditation' above his head and put it on the collage as well, as a question mark to the whole thing, wondering in what way meditation could help the world. Of course the photograph of the guru accidentally taken for my collage was of Babuji, taken from a small advertisement for a public meeting put there by the Danish Mission only once and only in one newspaper.

At that time I moved around a lot, but wherever I was I always kept that collage in the kitchen. Early in 1974 I lived in the countryside in the part of Denmark called Northern Jutland. There were six of us living in that place and at one point an abhyasi girl came to live with us for some time. She was astonished and could hardly believe her eyes when she entered our kitchen and saw her Master there on my collage. "Do you know him?" was the question she put. Of course I did not, and I briefly explained to her about my cutting Him out for my collage. Then she told me that she was doing meditation and that He was her Master. I did not respond much nor was I interested in hearing about her Master. Strange in some way, because I was as a teenager drawn towards India and mysticism, yoga etc., but somehow drifted in another direction.

After some time this abhyasi girl had a visit from some dear friends who were also abhyasis. It was a Friday evening and at eight thirty PM, three of them sat down in meditation in our sitting room with the centre-in-charge in Copenhagen, who was sending transmission to the whole country, while giving the weekly group sitting there. I entered the sitting room totally unprepared to find them sitting there in a line on the mattress on the floor. And I don't know how it happened, but the thought came to me that I would also try to meditate and I placed myself in a chair at the other end of the room and closed my eyes.

A few things happened to me during that short meditation. The main thing was that a tremendously strong vibration of love filled the whole room and came towards me and made me smile like Buddha. I opened my eyes and for a fraction of a second I saw myself sitting in front of myself. This was a little bit too much for me and I got up from the chair and stood by the window holding onto the windowsill, gazing outside, to make sure that the world was still there.

What was it? What was it that happened to me? I could not but respond to Babuji's call.

"Mysteries of Nature"

VANIA EKELUND, MARSEILLES, FRANCE

It is only looking back that I have realised how much my first meeting with Babuji influenced my acceptance of a master, for I had been very much put off by a preceding swami. Nonetheless I confess that constant search had led me into several experiences and eventually to Sahaj Marg. Numerous were the convergences of circumstances which made it possible for me to leave for India in 1982 to see Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur, one year before his *mahasamadhi*, for there is no such thing as chance.

My sister Monique organised trips to Shahjahanpur every year, but I had not felt prepared to follow her, the term Master scared me. Thus it was only in 1982 that an inexplicable impulse five days before the departure made me look for my passport at home. To my great consternation it had expired!

Three weeks before this sudden decision, the unexpected meeting with an acquaintance whom I hadn't seen in a very long time enabled me to obtain a valid passport within four days. Thus she made it possible for me to get my passport in time to depart for the Ashram.

One evening while we were full Babuji decided not to go into the meditation hall and held satsangh outdoors. The sun was setting behind him. His face was very dark. I was struck by his eyes, from which luminous rays came in my direction. Spiritual donkey that I was I wondered ought one to lower one's eyes in respect before the Master? But the electric current received made it impossible to do it. I was held as though electrocuted and camouflaged this strong emotion. The Master must have noticed that I was a hard nut to crack and he had to put on the high-tension current, which marked me for life! After I received the gaze of the Master I went into all corners of the ashram to weep floods of tears. I did not understand the reason for this sobbing. I thought that I was being quite ridiculous.

One year after this, we went to see him in the clinic in New Delhi. He was in a state of lethargy and there again a striking incident took place. We were with Monique at a corner window of his room where we could see his profile immobile, still in a coma. However, one had the impression that he guessed our presence. In this same inert position he fixed us with his gaze, penetrating into the depths of our hearts as if he were looking at us face to face. Monique and I were careful not to talk about this with each other, this penetrating gaze seemed to scrutinise the core of our hearts, and was inexplicable to our human eyes! Undoubtedly, we were each other afraid to be thought hallucinating or fanaticising. It was only two years later while talking about Babuji that we told each other about this so marvellous experience which once again engraved his love on our hearts.

While Babuji had left our world, another memorable event added proof that he didn't want us to stray from the path so that he could continue to assist us. The group in Marseilles had often been perturbed by the absence of a preceptor. I'm not particularly gifted with feeling much during meditation. However, a few months before the letter from Babuji nominating Chariji President of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission came, the silver helmet of Chariji's head was increasingly present during an entire meditation. I had met him at the Ecole Centrale in Paris in 1983 and in spite of my timidity, I had even complimented him on his book *My Master*. There was no doubt as to the 'silver helmet'. It was truly Chariji.

It is undoubtedly pretentious to think that having already wasted enough time on me that the Master furthered confirmed for me his choice, to avoid confusion or any further spiritual slow-down. I dare to think that this was not a product of my imagination. I had this within me. I know that he is love and that everything is possible. Babuji and I never had any verbal exchange, but the divinity in his eyes told me everything.

I am seventy-eight years old now. I am certainly not an exemplary abhyasi but I'm still faithful to Sahaj Marg. It is also the assurance that our beloved Babuji Maharaj left us a living Master in the person of Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari who, through love, knew how to lead us in his Master's footsteps.

Translated from French by Barbara Armstrong, July 1998.

"My Master"

DAYALJEE MAVJEE, PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA

Having read extensively I still felt something missing and prayed to the Supreme to send me a master. One night I was cleaning the top of my wardrobe and I found My *Master*, by P. Rajagopalachari and I read all night. Later that morning a friend of mine, Parvkaj Josh, telephoned me, and mentioned Rasik Kanjee was talking about Sahaj Marg yoga and was I interested? I jumped at this chance.

I had a talk with Rasikbhai and took the sitting on a trial basis, two sittings face to face which knocked me out and I felt so clean. The sitting on the day after brought me to the ground and thoroughly convinced me about the power of transmission and the powerful force of its work on me. This was in 1979.

I met Babuji Maharaj the next year, 1980, in South Africa. A friend of mine, Narendra Bhura, took me to meet Babuji in Lenasia and I was introduced to Master. He was sitting on a chair and greeted us with his arms raised above his head. He looked very fair and so lovely I wanted to hug him but I did not, we just sat in front of him as it was early and not many people around. I had just bought a car and told Master about it. He said, "Acha" and ever since most of the time I have only driven new cars whether hired or purchased.

One evening I came in a bit late from Pretoria to meet Master in Rose Avenue at Rasikbhai's home in Lenasia. As I approached most of the people were coming out. I entered the house and went into the room that Babuji was occupying. No one was at the entrance of the room; Babuji was sitting on the bed alone. I sat down on the floor facing him. Someone rushed in to say that Master was going to have his supper and he stopped them from asking me to leave.

I just sat there, while Master was served his meal. He never looked at me but just looked into my heart. After some time he offered me his plate with some food on it, I assumed I was to take it to the kitchen for washing. As soon as I came out the abhyasis started helping themselves to the food on the plate, and I joined in as well. I went back again, and sat down by Master. He was drinking water. He offered the glass to me, saying something in Hindi I did not understand. I thought He needed more water, but He gestured me to drink up the water, which I did. I eventually left the room after about forty-five minutes. Only now do I treasure that precious time spent at his feet.

I used to stand at the back of his chair and count the freckles on his head. Once I was sitting in front of him and having terrible thoughts and felt a piercing glance, I looked up and it was Master looking deep into my eyes. I felt guilty and got the fright of my life. I started to be aware of my thoughts thereafter. We spent a few days in Babuji's company but unfortunately I had a new job and could not spend every day in his presence, which I so regret now. I also missed out by not going to Shahjahanpur to visit Master, but lack of funds was my main problem and my health was not too good.

At times when Master left for India, sitting around the airport, you could feel Him stilling the atmosphere. It was quite unique, with the hustle of the planes, passengers rushing to and fro. The atmosphere around Him was peace, love and divine. When our dear Master left for his plane, I felt part of him in me, and also terribly lonely and shocked, because I felt I had known Him all my life and he was going away from us. I still feel this loneliness at times even though I know Chariji is easing my pain.

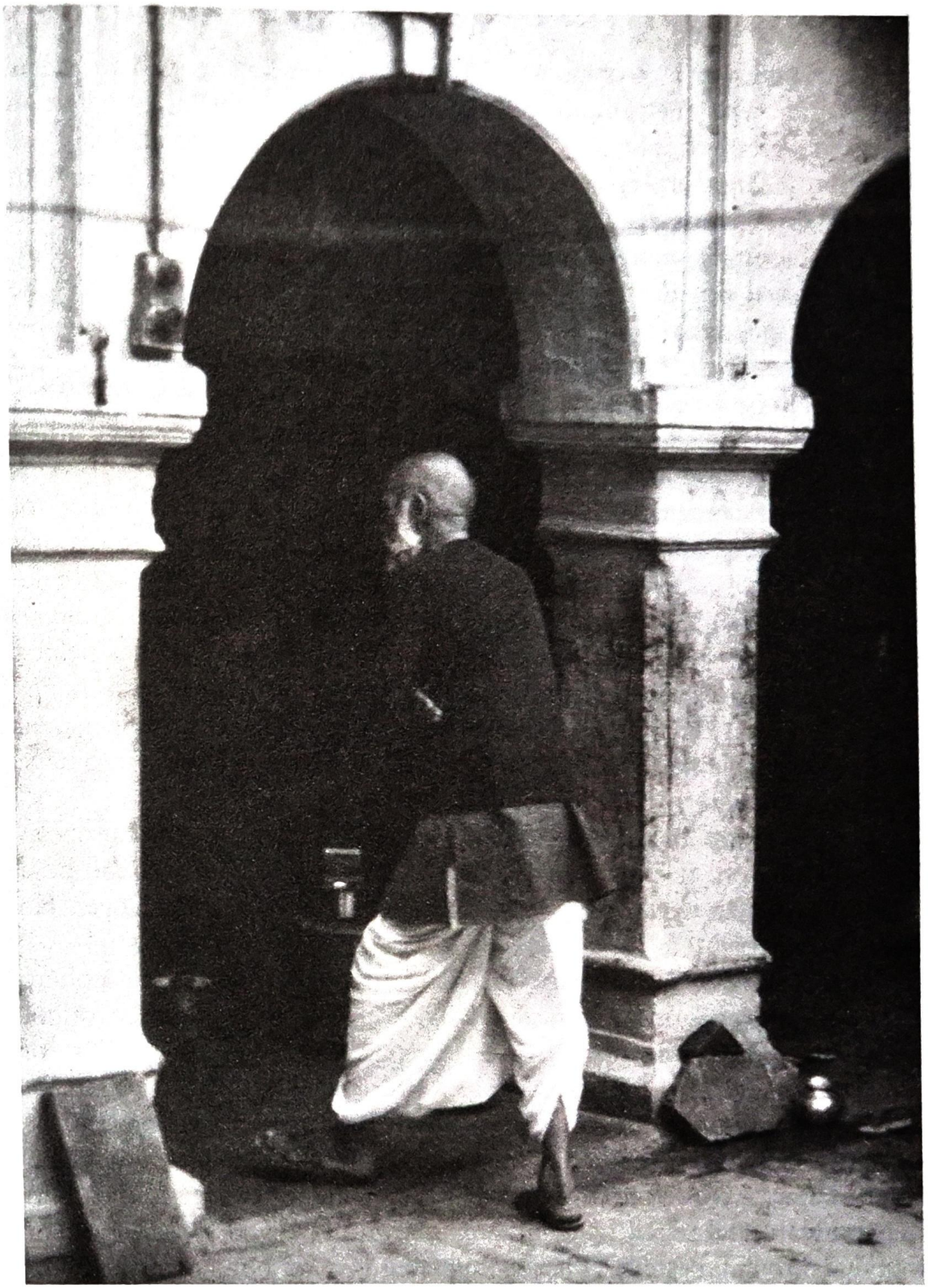
"Think of God"

MARI-ANN JOHNSSON, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Diary Extracts From December 1974 to March, 1983:

SHAHJAHANPUR:
Question: Will you help me to develop character?
Babuji said that if a man wanted to build a factory he would never succeed if he considered himself weak and if he worried about money and so on. But if he thought positively and started work with a strong will he was sure to succeed.
Question: Master, why do you smoke?
For a moment I saw Babuji's face turning stiff from, I felt, a mixture of amazement and annoyance with the absolute foolishness of that question he had heard so many times. After a brief pause, he said in a very clear and loud voice so that even the walls could not misunderstand his answer, "Because I like it!!!" This answer was so astonishing and yet so natural that suddenly I could not help bursting into laughter and looking at me Babuji broke into his famous roar of laughter, much to his own relief and the whole situation.

Babuji explained that scientists in the West claimed that meditation was injurious to health. But the fact was that Westerners had too many unnecessary thoughts, thereby forcing the mind, which was injurious to health. By meditation the mind was regulated and enlarged, so that unused parts of the brain were activated. At the same time the brain rested when needed. Consequently we became capable of using the brain only for necessary thoughts, which created tranquillity and harmony. This could only benefit health. Also we should renounce nonsense talk. One should keep promises.



There was a question whether abhyasis were being used to 'clean' each other. The question arose because of a person's feeling of irritation when in a group of abhyasis. Babuji said that this was not the case, but the negative feelings arising in a human being were solely born in him or herself, strongly assisted by the mind which was being worked upon and thereby becoming more sensitive. So we became sensitive to irrelevant things. It was not the character which was being worked upon, but the spiritual stage itself.

When Babuji heard that I was going by the night train, he said it could be very dangerous. In the night, I dreamt about bloodshed on a train. I heard the sound of shooting and screaming and I woke up, bathed in sweat. Was this a warning?

The next afternoon, Babuji suddenly said, "I feel the necessity of God being present when you persons are not here." In the evening, a taxi from Delhi arrived with some Danish abhyasis who could not wait to take the train to Shahjahanpur. As the ride had already been paid for I could go back free of charge. When I told Babuji, he said, "Then God has helped you. That is a much better arrangement." A few days later, I read in *The Hindustan Times* that the Lucknow Mail had been mugged by robbers and four white people had been shot on the very night I was supposed to have been on that train.

Babuji told us the difference between the Indian and the European kind of devotion. If Babuji said, "Jump from that rock and you will be a saint," the Indian would jump immediately, but the European? Never. He would be too frightened.

When Mrs. Stella from Switzerland arrived, the whole atmosphere changed completely into the most blissful state of soft love and devotion. She went to Babuji's chair on the veranda, and his eyes were sort of drowned in her loving presence. It was a sweet moment of absolute divine devotion which penetrated my heart, and it was obvious that Babuji was extremely affected by Stella's love for him. I saw the same affection when sister Marianne Husted from Denmark arrived, and she ran up to Babuji in the courtyard and seized him and laughing with love and joy, swung him round and round. Because of her spontaneous love for him he laughed and accepted her behaviour, otherwise, I do not think it would be possible. I

once touched Babuji on his shoulder in misguided zeal, and he drew back as if he had been struck by a sword.

INAUGURATION OF THE SHAHJAHANPUR ASHRAM:
Babuji cut the red string on February 5, 1976. He came walking with Chariji and joined his hands in the Indian way of greeting while his face expressed pride in an innocent way. He was so happy to inaugurate his ashram. It was a sacred moment for me too as one of the first Europeans to enter the meditation hall. It was in his speech on that day that Babuji declared, "I do not belong to India. I belong to the whole world."

Babuji said, "If you do not want to speak untruth, then do as follows: say to yourself, 'I want to tell the truth,' not anything like 'I don't want to lie,' for in that case you are giving power to the negative thought."

Asking for spiritual work as a preceptor an abhyasi was told by Babuji and Chariji, "Why? You are radiating all the time. You should go and speak to people. You have learned so much." And they said that an abhyasi might well reach high spiritual advancement without being a preceptor. There was no difference between preceptor and non-preceptor in this aspect.

Question: Master, don't you ever feel lonesome?
Babuji: What's that?
Babuji to abhyasi: Create the monastic seat in your heart and retire into it every day.

When we were about to leave Babuji, we said tearfully, "We are leaving now." Babuji said, "You are going, not leaving."

Suddenly Babuji would appear in the early afternoon while people were resting and one or two of us would have been wandering restlessly around longing for Him. Then Gunde Rao would say, "Somebody must have pulled him. That is why he comes." Babuji would sit on a charpoy smiling happily, just being there. And we would sit near him, happy with gratefulness because Babuji had given us the greatest gift by answering our inner cry.

DENMARK:
Here, I experienced a couple of times that Babuji suddenly opened the doors into a room where abhyasis were sitting and longing, look around,

apparently confused and say, "Somebody called." Nobody had been calling loudly, but people surely called from inside themselves.
Question: How to develop sensitivity to our inner condition?
Babuji: You all have already, compared to the Indians. Even if you are sensitive you will reach a state where you cannot express your condition. I cannot express my condition in words.
Question: How to get constant remembrance?
Babuji: Before you start working, think of God, then do the work. That's enough. You will forget and then again remember. That, forgetfulness will be remembrance.

SHAHJAHANPUR:
In the ashram I suddenly began to feel extremely restless, longing to see Babuji, and hurried to his home. Entering the courtyard, I burst out, "Babuji I had to come, I could not wait to see you." Babuji said, "You are expected, sister." I said, "I am so happy to be here." And Babuji said, "I am also happy that you have come." This is proof that it is essential to follow the inner call from the Master. For some hours I was alone with Babuji and He did a lot of work on me while I was just being there. As usual I asked Babuji for advice in order to speed up my progress. This time He answered, "You waste too much time thinking unnecessary thought. Think of God, then all your problems will be solved. There is nothing else for you to do." At other times Babuji told me to go on cleaning and meditating.
Babuji: When abhyasis behave with discipline, it gives the Master rest and peace.
Babuji: What is the use of showering transmission on the abhyasis when they do not make themselves ready for it?
Babuji: Blessed are those persons who do not read papers, for through Nature they realise God.

One day we Europeans took shelter from the rain standing in the doorway of the family side of Babuji's residence. Then came Babuji walking calmly across the courtyard in the rain with a closed umbrella in his hand. He handed it to me and walked back to his chair through the rain. What a selfless heart, and what an embarrassing lesson for me.

New Delhi: In possession of the address of the medical clinic in New Delhi where Babuji might or might not be, I followed my heart and went to India alone, something I have never regretted. I had faith in being guided to Babuji. Two Indian brothers in the aircraft offered me a ride to the centre of Delhi, as their brother in Delhi was to pick them up by car. I showed the driver the address of the clinic and he said it was too far in the opposite direction. Suddenly one of the brothers said, "Where are you heading?" "Oh, I don't know, but I am heading for this address," I said. And then, two persons came walking towards the car, right in front of us, and I recognised Babuji's grandson and an abhyasi. I jumped out of the car and joined these two who had come upon me 'accidentally' on their way to Babuji. So, I was soon sitting before Babuji in his wheelchair in the garden for the last time. He looked at me in such a soft way that expressed, "At long last you have come."

After that day, Babuji got weaker and I was with him in his room as often as possible. He could not speak because of an opening into his throat to help him breathe. Sometimes his mouth would move as if he wanted to say something, but he could not. Only his eyes expressed different things. He was in such a state of suffering that I cannot describe it and cannot understand it either. I heard that Chariji had been there, crying for his Master. Maybe he was the only one to realise and feel what Babuji had to go through.

"You are Not Leaving, You are Only Going"

K.V. SUBBARAO, VIJAYAWADA, INDIA

I used to struggle a lot to practise constant remembrance. When it came to my mind, I would think of Master. Then, with a feeling of guilt for forgetting Master most of the time, I used to try to practise it again and it used to be very tiring and cause a lot of strain on my mind.

Then, one time, I happened to be in Shahjahanpur and I went to Babuji Maharaj, but I didn't discuss my problem with him. When he saw me, he immediately told me, "Whenever you do your work, that is, when you go to office, or when you start your work, you must connect yourself with the Divine, and carry on the work." I had not told him my problem, but still, he read my mind and gave me the solution to my problem. So, that is the real way to practice constant remembrance, that is, to connect ourselves with the Master. Further, constant remembrance must be practised with a sense of love and devotion also. Our remembrance must make the remembered remember us. Actually, during the course of our practice we must get drowned in the remembrance and our remembrance must go from conscious level to subconscious level. Then only, we get the real benefit from our constant remembrance.

When I have to speak from the heart, I remember the day when I met Babuji Maharaj for the first time. Actually, when I met Him, I thought, "He loves me. He belongs to me. I also belong to Him." When he was loving, when he smiled, the smile haunted me. I felt a strange force passing through my body and heart. He didn't ask my name or from where I came, but I felt He knew everything about me. When I used to go to Him, from the time I started from my place, I used to feel my condition change.

I met Him several times. I got the opportunity to be with him for a number of days. I got the opportunity, also, to be reprimanded by him. Of course, I got so many blessings. One day, another abhyasi and myself went to Master's house. We went about ten o'clock in the morning. About ten-thirty or eleven, you know, the family members requested Babuji to come for lunch. Babuji also asked me to come for lunch. We went inside the room, he sat on one chair, and I sat on another chair. Then, he suddenly asked me, "Did you come alone?" See, in my selfishness, I forgot that I came with another brother; it did not occur to me that I should call him, and take him to lunch. But, you see, in his divine love and affection Babuji remembered that another person had come and was not taking food. It's really a great lesson for all of us.

On another occasion, I was doing some construction work in the ashram. The man in charge of the ashram used to make obstacles for us; the work was not proceeding well. We approached Babuji and requested him to give a letter to this man asking him to extend co-operation to us. Babuji asked me to dictate the letter, so I began, "Dear So-and-So, you are hereby instructed to extend co-operation," but Babuji immediately became alert. "No, no, this is too much officialdom, you know? We must write, '...hereby requested to extend co-operation'." So, for Him, any brother is the same, and we have to use polite language.

On another occasion, after staying for a few days, about nine o'clock in the night, we were leaving to go to our home. Actually, I didn't want to disturb Babuji, but the brother who was attending Babuji at that time insisted that I should take leave of Master. So, I went to Babuji's cot where he is lying, told him in a very low voice, "Babuji, I am leaving." He became immediately very alert. He said, "No, you are not leaving. You are only going. You will come back again."

Once, on another occasion, he told me, "Every abhyasi must think that 'the Mission is mine, not Ram Chandra's'." That is how we must think about the Mission, that it is each of ours, not Master's only.

Babuji once described Lord Krishna to me, "You know how Lord Krishna looks?" I told him I didn't know. Then he told me that Lord Krishna was short in stature, dark in colour, had a big moustache and a good physique. Actually, at that time, Babuji told me that the birthplace of

Lord Krishna, which is popularly believed to be in Mathura, was actually under a bridge on the river Yamuna. The actual place where he was born was at the second pillar. Master wanted to construct a meditation hall at that place. I asked Babuji, "Babuji, how can you construct a meditation hall in the river?" He told me, "No, this is the pillar; you can go fifty metres from here, then you construct a meditation hall. Then I will charge it."

On another occasion, we were there in Babuji's house. We were actually talking with some of the abhyasis. We forgot about Babuji for some time. Those who have visited Shahjahanpur will be familiar with Prakash, his eldest son, and Prakash's house. The house consists of ground floor, first floor, and the roof. There is a staircase leading to the first floor.

After some time, somebody told us that Babuji had gone to the top of the house. At that time Babuji was very weak; he was hardly able to walk a few steps at a time, that too, with the help of a stick. And somebody told us that Babuji was on the top of the house. We were really amazed, how could he climb to the top of the house? Immediately, we all ran upstairs. At the top of the house, there was a room without a roof, where all the usual things, shoes and the like were kept.

Babuji was searching for something. We thought that he could not find what he wanted and because he was very tired we wanted to bring him down. Another abhyasi and myself supported him and practically carried him down. In the process, Babuji happened to touch my head. Immediately I felt absolute weightlessness in the body and mind. It was so pleasing, I wanted to be in that condition forever. Of course, it lasted only about thirty to forty-five minutes; but he had blessed me with a nice experience, which transcended my physical experience. I had so many experiences with Babuji, but this was the best.

Adapted from a talk given n New Jersey in 1986.

"I Do Not Inconvenience Any Person"

G. K. REDDY, PENNSYLVANIA, USA

We had just arrived in Shahjahanpur on my first visit and Babuji was giving the morning sitting of Basant Panchami. I had no idea where He was sitting and there was still a question in my mind about transmission and how it worked. So, I sat in a corner of the building and started meditating. Then, just after a few minutes, I saw a beam of light, exactly like a searchlight. It came from one particular spot in Babuji's house, and it travelled from one corner to the other corner, in one sweep. That's all I saw in the meditation, in the first few minutes itself. Then regular meditation went on.

Later on, after meditation was over and the day broke, I asked my preceptor where Babuji sat. He showed me and that was the exact location from which the searchlight came. Then I realised that there was some power coming from there as though Babuji was scanning the people present. And I realised, yes, probably this is how the transmission works. That was my first glimpse of the transmission.

Right from childhood, I got the bent of spiritual mind. I started my prayers, nobody taught me, but for myself. I left my home and parents at the age of nine or ten because I had to study in another place about fifteen miles away from my place. Fifteen miles here is nothing, but during the 1950's in India, fifteen miles was a big journey. At that time, I developed this spiritual attitude and all that. I used to do traditional Hindu method of japa. But I was not satisfied. So, I started looking for some practical person who had achieved that state, instead of simply writing the books, who could practically guide me. I went to many ashrams, and I didn't find. When I joined this Mission, I was doing meditation by Shri Vivekananda, regular raja yoga, by control of breath and I proceeded up to a certain

stage, then it was difficult for me, and I was always praying to get a teacher who could guide me further. Then I came to know about this Mission. I went there but I could not believe, because here Master was just a small person with normal clothes and a normal house, sitting in a small old chair. Seeing Him sitting there was amazing, I became fascinated. From that time onwards, I left everything else. Now, I just do meditation, read the books written by Babuji, and constant remembrance, that's all I do.

In May 1975, I visited Babuji for the second time and I spent some time in the morning with Him sitting with all other abhyasis. At about 11:30 AM Babuji asked us all to go inside and take lunch. And then he called me and said, "I know you are South Indian. You always take curds in every meal, so I arranged, specially, curds for you. So, don't hesitate, take it."

I cannot explain my condition. I almost broke down, and I told Babuji, "I did not come here just to eat the nice food and the accustomed food, but I came for spiritual food." "Yes, I know that," He said, 'but I do not inconvenience any person. I know that you people use, so I arranged for you, go and take it." So, I had no choice, and I just felt like weeping because Babuji could know about my attachment to certain food or anything else about me. Then I thought, "This is terrible." I have gone to many ashrams in India, and everywhere the abhyasis have to serve the Master with many sorts of things. But here, it is just the opposite, Master Himself coming out and serving the required food, even without being asked. That is the great thing, which I cannot say is happening anywhere else!

When, I once again visited Shahjahanpur, I had the opportunity or the fortune of talking to Babuji on a one-to-one basis about my own personal problems. Babuji asked me, "When are you leaving?" "Tomorrow I am going by the ten-thirty bus." That's all I said, I did not add anything else because I knew how to get to the bus and I was not particular about taking lunch before. Then at about nine thirty, Babuji calls me and says, "Do you remember that your bus is at ten thirty?" "Yes, Babuji, I want to be as much as possible at your feet, so that's why I am staying." I told Him, "I can go, I have enough time." "No, I arranged for your lunch," He said, "you go and take the lunch, and then go, because you don't get any good

food on the way." Again, it was a problem for me, I could not explain to Master what I came for. But the incident moved me very much. I determined that from that time onwards whenever I went to Shahjahanpur, I did not want anything to be served by Babuji. To the extent possible, I would serve Babuji.

Because of my duties, I was asked to go from Bombay to Iran for two or three years. So, before going to Iran, Master received me at His home for three days. I asked Babuji, "I am going to Iran, and there is no preceptor, there are no abhyasis, and they're all Muslims, they cannot even tolerate this sort of Hinduism or spirituality or meditation. What should I do?" He said, "Don't worry, you don't have to worry about that. If there is no preceptor, think of me, and do meditation, regular meditation. Now and then, just write letters. Do not expect that you will get reply, but simply write letters, and do the practice. You don't have to worry about it." That's all He said.

So, I did my meditation, and I used to write now and then. When I visited India, I visited Babuji; I had the opportunity again to stay with Babuji one or two days, and every time I went I had the opportunity to sit with Babuji, serve Babuji for some time; I talked to Him personally. That was my fortune, that it is my fortune I never felt any decrease in my condition. I was there for four years, and my condition improved. I had beautiful meditations sitting many thousands of miles away. I never felt a loss.

"Divinity is a Play"

ANONYMOUS

Babuji was expected in Denmark for the first time by a little group of abhyasis who came from different parts of the whole country. Since we had no preceptor at that time most of us had been introduced to Sahaj Marg by Rajaji, our living Master's father. With impatience we gathered at the airport to greet our Master. One of the abhyasis had arranged everything beautifully to prepare Master a worthy welcome. Thus we were allowed to pass through all control points where huge inscriptions were hanging: 'The greatest is coming'. This was meant for the boxing world champion, who was also expected.

A little bus was waiting to bring us near the plane. When the bus stopped the plane was landing so that we had hardly time to get out.

Now, was the unforgettable moment where we saw Master coming down the gangway, a very delicate little man, more light than body from which came strong power and I felt an indescribable love like never before. We did not know what happened to us. My husband and I were not able to take one more step towards Master. We were as though petrified and I got the idea that one should wrap this extremely precious and subtle treasure in a big layer of cotton wool to avoid any damage. Fortunately some other abhyasis were able to welcome Master and bring him into the bus. Even there, we too were not able to approach Master. My husband even went to the back of the bus because he could not bear the strong power coming from Master. After the bus we followed Master and the others like sleep walkers. All doors were wide open. We passed without passport and the only thing I realised was an employee of the airport holding a door open, saying, "I think he is the greatest."

Two years after Master came to our country we flew to India to visit him in Shahjahanpur. It was the first time we had taken such a long flight. I was quite afraid of air sickness and things like that, but nothing bad happened to us. We arrived at New Delhi Airport to be greeted by preceptors who welcomed us like relatives. They made us feel at home and familiarised us with our surroundings and as far as necessary with the way of doing things there. Anyway, we were excited, not only by the idea of being with our beloved Master soon but also by India.

Before boarding the train for Shahjahanpur we had to stop first with our taxi at a kind of supermarket to get something to drink for the long journey. My husband came out of the market very happy with both arms full of bottles. After a few minutes he said suddenly to the taxi driver, "Stop, please return immediately to the market."

We got a shock when we heard that he had forgotten his little handbag on the counter in the shop. This bag contained all our travelling papers, all our money, bank notes etc...The taxi driver had a compassionate smile on his face, sure that we would never get our bag back. My husband rushed into the market and, oh wonder, there it was right on the same place where he had left it!

When we arrived at Shahjahanpur we were expected at the train station by Brother Gunde Rao, Master's personal secretary, and we were a little astonished that his welcome was not too friendly. The next day Br. Rao told us by the way, but a bit reproachfully, that Master had had a lot of work to do with us since He had watched and taken care of us all the way along! We felt quite ashamed. But Master welcomed us so full of love and happiness that we felt very happy, being deeply thankful to Him, for it was He who had done the wonder at the market and helped us in every respect on our journey.

The whole time we were staying with Master at the old ashram was like a nice dream full of experiences of all kinds. We realised very soon that Master knew everything about us and our thoughts. Having been made preceptors we got the feeling that we should enlarge our little weekend-house in the mountains to be able to welcome, on weekends or holidays, other abhyasis and persons who might be interested in Sahaj

Marg meditation. So my husband started at once to draw a plan of a possible enlargement.

When Master came out of his room he asked me, "What is he doing?" and I told him. "Well, you will have room enough for ten to twelve people, that is right and enough," he said, never having seen our place. When the sketch was about completed my husband and I started measuring the space we had in which to put beds and mattresses we discovered that it would take ten to twelve.

Another time we were around Master on the veranda with me sitting directly in front of him which was quite unusual—I used to sit on the right-hand side of Master, fanning him and chasing the flies. Master suddenly said, "I answer every letter, either by writing or by my work." I knew that his words were meant for me because I was always wondering why Master never answered my letters but I had not said a word about this. I realised that my questions were answered and all my initial problems were solved...apparently by themselves.

"...As You Will Become One"

C. RAJAGOPALAN, CHENNAI, INDIA

Since Babuji's *mahasamadhi*, as a personal policy, I have avoided talking of my fond memories of the days I spent with him so as not to divert the attention of the growing number of abhyasis away from the living Master. I realised that remembrance in the present should not be blurred by memories of the past, a habit invariably indulged in by proud old timers. I started the practice in October 1974 and met Babuji in August 1975, ten months later. I had quickly developed a craving to meet Babuji as the result of my intense introduction to the system with about twenty individual sittings from Chariji in fifteen days when I was on vacation in Madras.

As sales executive of a leading textile mill in Ahmedabad, I was sent on a sales tour of Uttar Pradesh and took two days during my work tour to visit Shahjahanpur. I was the only abhyasi there other than his family. Later that evening, an aged abhyasi named Guptaji who had a poultry farm at Hyderabad joined us and Babuji was talking to us well past midnight. He told how he worked during the forties and fifties, travelling in trains, standing near the toilet, etc. He turned around to me suddenly and said, "I do not talk about all this to anyone but my close associates, as you will become one." I did not realise the full import of this statement, till Guptaji later asked me for a treat, because Babuji told me in my first meeting with him that I would become a close associate of his.

Babuji did not quite catch that I was in a selling job and asked, "You are in sales tax?" I then talked to him about textile marketing and he listened patiently. The result of this as I realised later, was my selling Rs. 3.5 million worth of cloth in that tour. It was a lot in those days. As a sequel to this gracious turn, my company thought I had a grip on the U.P.

textile market and sent me to U.P. every month for the next six months. I was therefore able to visit Babuji Maharaj every month and became very familiar with him. I still cherish one remark, our present Master, Chariji, made to me in early 1976 after seeing the visitors' register in Babuji's home, "I see you have been visiting Babuji frequently. I envy you."

Babuji told me, "There are too many Rajagopals in the Mission, C.A. Rajagopalachari, P. Rajagopalachari, S.K. Rajagopalan, etc. anyway you tell me your full name correctly." When I told him my full name, like a child he repeated, "C. Rajagoplan, C. Rajagopalan," ten times to memorise it–not as a joke. Two years later, I was alone in his room at Shahjahanpur pressing his feet and he suddenly asked me, "Who are you?" "I am Rajagopal from Ahmedabad." "In Ahmedabad," Babiji said, "C. Rajagoplan is there." Apologetically I corrected myself, "I am that C. Rajagopalan."

Babuji meant everything seriously and remembered it also. In April 1977 when he was on the flight to Madras from Malaysia with Chariji he asked him to show him two abhyasis whom he could make into good speakers in the Mission. On arrival at Madras, Chariji pointed me out to Babuji and said, "Maybe you can consider him."

Babuji then called me into his room at his son's place at Besant Nagar and said, "I have not studied much. I want educated fellows like you to talk about the Mission. Knowledge you acquire, speaker I will make of you." I was in tears remembering the *sloka* in the Gita, "*mookam, karoti, vachalam,*" "the dumb is converted into an orator, by the Grace of the Lord."

Later, in 1980, on his way to South Africa when he was at Ahmedabad he asked me to speak on human perfection. After I gave that talk he patted me on my shoulder and said, "Whenever you speak I am reminded of KCV. You speak like him. No, no, you speak better than him. You know why? Because I have made you. KCV came to me with a lot of theoretical knowledge. You knew nothing. I have made you. KCV read Ramayana seven times. It is not necessary for you to read Ramayana." I always remember this gracious blessing when I am to speak for Sahaj Marg.

Babuji took care of his disciples and as a matter of course performed physical cures too. I dislocated the ball of my right shoulder from

its socket joint in 1964 while bowling in cricket and I used to have recurrence of this dislocation frequently even if I unconsciously rotated my shoulder in sleep. Orthopaedic surgeons said there was no cure for it in the normal course and surgery could be attempted without guarantee of success. I therefore decided to live with it by avoiding rotation of the shoulder. In 1979 I was pressing Babuji's feet in his room at Ahmedabad and I suddenly felt somebody caressing my shoulder. When I realised this, he was embarrassed and said there was some dirt at that place. I was wearing fresh clothes and what Babuji meant was that there was a flaw in the shoulder. After this, there was never a recurrence of dislocation of the shoulder, even if I rotated it or did bowling in cricket. It was indeed a performance of internal surgery by Babuji.

I once felt that if about one hundred and twenty close disciples of Babuji's spent three days each every year at Shahjahanpur praying intensely for his health it might help Babuji. I wrote this to him and got permission to visit Shahjahanpur for three days. I cleaned myself meticulously before reaching Shahjahanpur and started heartfelt prayer for Babuji's health as soon as I reached the ashram. Babuji responded to this attempt after arriving at the ashram from his home, by asking me to come with my luggage and leave for the railway station at night from his place. I said that I had just arrived that morning and I was to stay there for three days. Then he was quiet.

The next day also, Babuji came to the ashram and asked if I was leaving that night to bring my luggage to his place. I told him that I was leaving the next night and he said, "Come tomorrow morning to my place with your luggage. The next morning when I was preparing to leave the ashram for Babuji's house, there was a phone message saying that Babuji was not feeling well and no one should visit him from the ashram. I was in a dilemma, but with much trepidation I entered Babuji's residence. His attendant, Br. Gunde Rao asked as I entered, "Did you not get the message? Why did you foolishly come? Anyway, now that you have come, stay with Babuji till I go to the bank and come back."

An extraordinarily pleasant surprise awaited me when I entered Babuji's room. "I have kept today free for you," he said. I was moved. I overcame my emotion and continued my planned prayers for his health

sitting by his side. After a few hours he suddenly asked, "To whom are you praying?" "I know only you," I replied, "so therefore I am praying to you." "That is right," Babuji said, "How can you pray to someone you do not know?" This confirmed my view that for the Master's health we must pray only to the living Master.

On that eventful day of my life, Babuji suddenly said, "I am feeling giddy." I told him to lie down and started pressing his feet and he said, "You must have not pressed anybody's feet in your life?" "Yes," I admitted. He then said, "I will show you how to do it." He sat up and pressed my feet, demonstrating the method. I then started pressing the way he had shown. As Babuji was lying down near the edge of the cot, I was precariously perched at the edge and after a while experienced tremendous discomfort and consequent pain. I thought of how in the Mahabharat, Karna did not move his body even when a bee bit his thigh and blood was oozing, because his *guru parashuram* was sleeping with his head on his lap.

I remembered Babuji writing how He had sent Rama and Krishna into this world and thought if Karna could put up with the pain for a mere *parashuram*, should I not bear the pain for the sake of a matchless personality like Babuji? Lost in that thought, I continued pressing Babuji's feet until he said loudly, "Bravo!" and got up. When I asked Babuji what he had said, he replied, "I said *sabash*." I felt rapturous at that moment and even the memory of this incident makes me feel fulfilled about my existence.

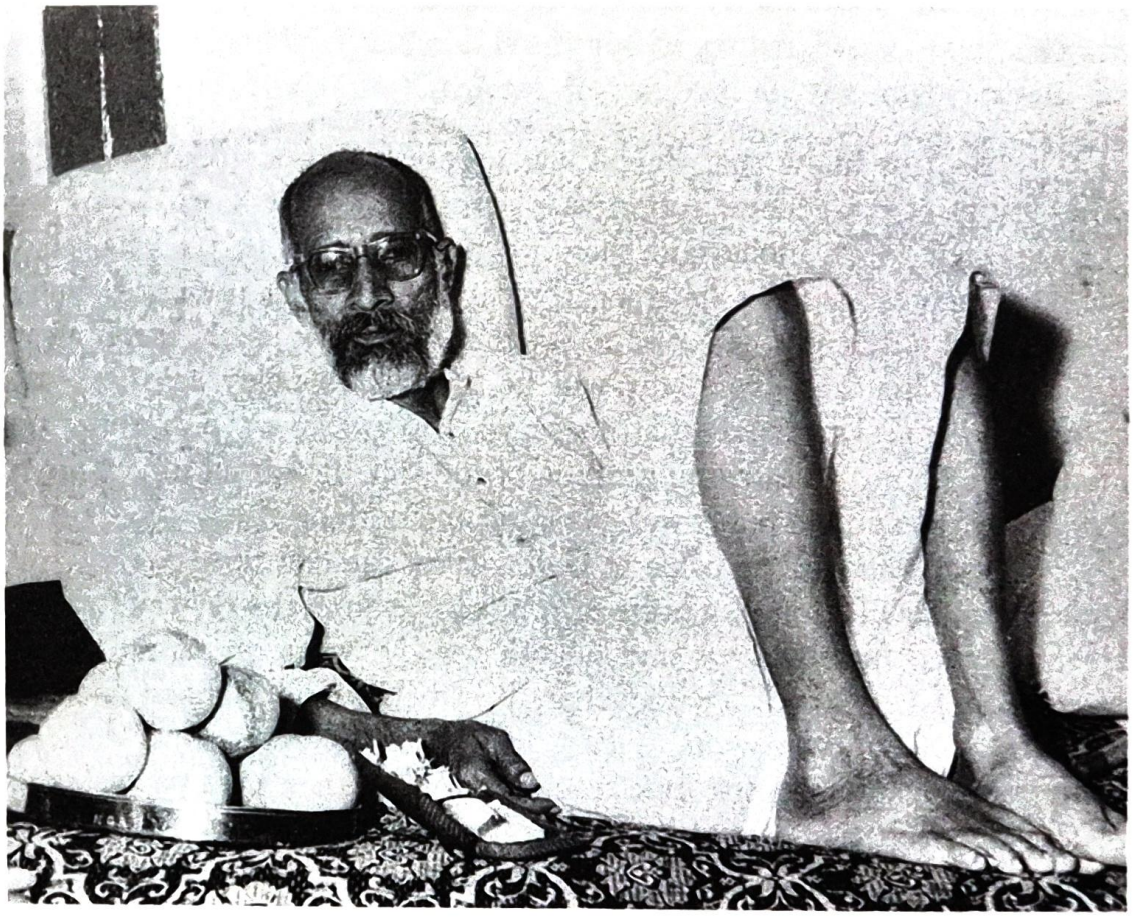
I was very attached to singing, and Chariji had told me that music would not help my evolution and therefore I was trying to wean myself away from this attachment. Babuji helped me in a remarkable manner. Once he complained of a stomach ache and I suggested his listening to my singing to divert himself. He agreed and lay down and asked me to sing. My wife Prema and I sang two *bhajans*, then Babuji said, "*Lalaji aur ek sunna chahte hain*." Lalaji wants to listen to one more. I was thrilled to tears and after this the desire to sing before anybody went, the petty talent having its fulfilment when the Lord of both the worlds appreciated it. Thus he liberated me from egoistic attachment.

One day when Babuji was in Ahmedabad, he told me every two hours, "You grow quickly." After he said it three times I told Babuji,

"Instead of repeatedly telling me this why don't you do something to make me get total subMission to you?" Babuji laughed and said, "You want to eat fifty *chapattis* at a time. Don't worry. Increase your dependence on Master." By this Babuji clearly indicated that dependence on Master is the vital technique for adoption.

Babuji asked me, "What is your salary?" I told him that I had absolutely no material problems. "*Phirto Jaldi Bado*," (then grow quickly) he said. In 1982 after the Surat Celebrations he again asked me what my salary was and said, "If you have any problem, tell me now, I will do something." "I have no problems," I said.

I was with Babuji on my birthday. I told him, "Today is my birthday. I want it to be my death day, too." "I don't understand what you mean," he said. "I want to become dead to everything else except you." "Oh," he said, "that way. *Jeete raho*," and he patted me repeatedly on the shoulder.



"I Will Give You...Hookah Major!"

S.A. SARNAD, GULBARGA, INDIA

All of us know that Babuji was a very humorous person, unlike other saints. It is a general notion that saints should not laugh. They are not expected to be humorous, they are not expected to be jolly, they should be serious, without laughing. This is an erroneous notion. Babuji's idea was quite different. He used to say that man must laugh, laugh away the cares of life, and then only will he be able to enjoy spiritual life. Babuji's humour was such that there was no prick, no pungency, no intention to hurt, no sarcasm, nothing of the sort. It was all innocent. It was all well-meant and full of well-meaning and nothing else.

Once when Babuji came to Gulbarga for the first time in 1957, we took him home in a tonga, a horse drawn vehicle, from the railway station. He had come from Madras and all the way he went on narrating his experiences with Dr. K.C. Varadachari. So when Babuji Maharaj and the late Ishwar Sahai who wrote *A Peep Into Sahaj Marg* and was Master's constant companion at that time reached Tirupati, they were taken home by Dr. Varadachari and comfortably accommodated in a room. And Babuji could not manage without a hookah. But he was hesitant to take out the hookah from his suitcase because he did not know whether Varadachari liked it or not. K.C. Varadachari was known to be an orthodox Brahmin; in fact, he was not. But Babuji thought him to be so, and he would not displease him on any account. So he asked Varadachari whether he could smoke cigarettes and Varadachari said, "I have no objection, you can smoke." And Babuji managed with cigarettes only for three days. And on all the three days, Dr. Varadachari went on putting questions to Babuji on philosophy. On the fourth day, Babuji said to Iswar Sahaiji, "Master Saheb, now, take out the hookah! This man is entrapped completely! This

philosopher is completely in our cap. You can take out the hookah." I can picture it even now, how innocently Babuji narrated the whole thing. It was simply wonderful.

In 1973 or so, we were in Channapatna, a town between Bangalore and Mysore, and there is an ashram there. In Channapatna it was natural for some of us to feel that Babuji must see the Vrindawan Gardens which is famous in Karnataka in India. It is a beautiful garden. Some of our abhyasis took him to Vrindawan Gardens. It was late in the night before he returned. We waited until eleven thirty, twelve thirty, one o'clock and still he did not return. Then we slept. He came at two o'clock and when we requested him to eat, he said, "What should I eat? I don't feel like eating." He took something but by the time he took his dinner, it was three thirty or so and all of us were feeling sleepy. Babuji slept on a cot, and I was sleeping by his side on the floor. After a few moments, Babuji asked me, "Sarnad, are you asleep?" Immediately I got up and said, "No Babuji, I am not getting sleep." At this others also woke up. Then he asked me, "What is the time now?" "It is quarter to four." "Then it is useless to sleep now," he said. All of us began to laugh, you know. It was such a subtle humour that he possessed.

At another time, perhaps 1971 or so because at that time Dr. Varadachari had just passed away, we were in Madras and Babuji also was in Madras. We were to visit Tirupati to console Varadachari's father and I don't remember whether Chariji was also with us. We went to Tirupati by car from Madras. Our *Chachaji* was there, father of Master, he was with us and it was a very jolly journey from Madras to Tirupati.

There is a small earthen plate placed in the cup of the hookah, and then tobacco put on it and then charcoal pieces and it is lit up The earthen plate was broken and there was no another piece available anywhere because nobody uses hookah in South India. I told Babuji Maharaj, "Babuji, don't worry. I will manage your hookah with this only." So I somehow managed with that broken earthen plate and throughout our journey there was no difficulty at all for his hookah. Whenever he required hookah, I prepared it and gave it and he was very much pleased. When we were returning from Tirupati we halted on our way at a place under a tree. It was very pleasant weather and Babuji said, "Dear Sarnad,

you have managed the hookah very well. I would like to confer a degree upon you, a PhD degree to you, I will give you a certificate hookah pass. You have gratuated with hookah major!"

It was in 1976 or so when I had stayed in Shahjahanpur for a long time. During that period, Babuji said, "You know Sarnad, Parthasarathi has written many books of course about the system, about me and other things. They are all interesting books, full of knowledge, full of information, full of education, but he thinks that I have given him all the knowledge that was necessary for that. He does not know that here (pointing to his chest) there is nothing. Inside me there is no knowledge at all. It is all '*than than Gopal*' and he told this story:

There was a monastery—a *math*, we call it in our country—with a *samadhi* or a tomb of some saint and there was a Master who was very famous in that part of the country.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, a disciple came to him to learn something from him and he stayed there for some time. When his education was complete, the moment of parting came and the guru gave him the gift of a baby donkey. The disciple took great care of that donkey because it was a gift from his Master. Unfortunately, on his way, the donkey died. The disciple was very sorry. He felt very unhappy. He said, "What has happened? I am a sinner. I must be a sinner and that's why this thing has happened." So he went on cursing himself and kept on weeping for some time. How long could he weep? So he managed to bury the baby donkey and he sat under a tree nearby without taking any food and without going into the town. Time passed like that.

People passing saw the disciple sitting with his eyes closed. They thought that he must be hungry and placed some fruit before him and went on their way. When the disciple opened his eyes he saw the fruits. He was really hungry. He ate it and thanked his Master. The next day the same thing happened, and within a few days there was a long queue of people coming and offering him all sorts of eatables and money, etc. and the disciple said, "Oh! It is nice! I must thank my Master." And within a few months he got a shrine constructed, on the site of the donkey baby's grave, and it became a holy shrine, a monastery and he himself became a guru. His fame spread far and wide, so much so that his guru heard about

him. He said, "How is it that my disciple has become more famous than I? I must pay a visit to him. I must see what he has done and what he is doing now." So the old man went all the way to visit his disciple but he was not allowed in and had to take an appointment for the next day.

This was conveyed to the disciple who realised, "Oh, he is my guru. I should not keep him waiting." So he came running and prostrated at the feet of his guru and begged his pardon, "Sorry sir, I kept you waiting so long. I am very sorry for that. Please excuse me. Please come in." And he took him inside and treated him nicely. Gently the guru asked him, "My young friend, what is the secret of all this fame and name?"

He said, "Sire, please excuse me. I am a sinner. I lost your gift," and he begged his pardon and began to apologise. He said, "It is by your grace that I am getting all this fame and name. It was the gift that you gave, you know. Unfortunately, the baby donkey died and I buried it here and I constructed this shrine and it is due to that all this is happening."

And the guru kindly patted him and said, "Don't worry my son. You need not feel sorry. What do you think there is in my monastery? It is the mother of this donkey!"

So this is how Babuji's humour was full of information, full of education.

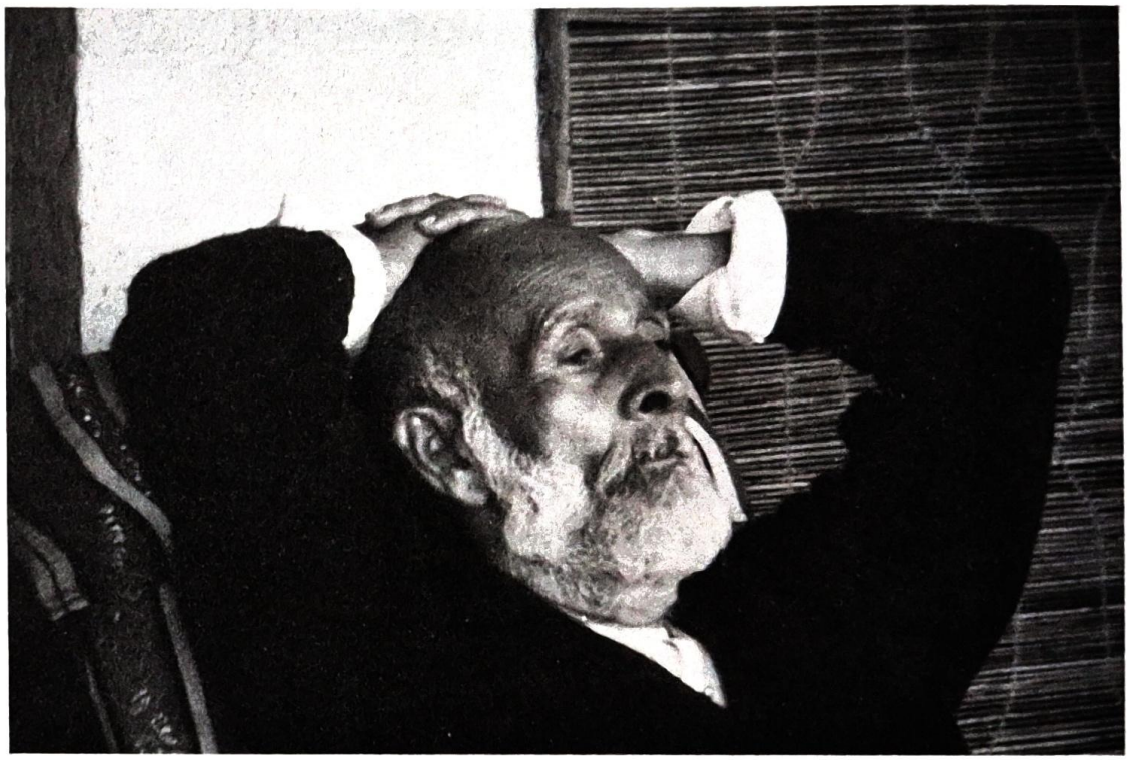
Adapted from a talk given in Eisenarzt, Germany, April 1994.

"A Song for Babuji"

SISTER KASTURI, LUCKNOW, INDIA

Babuji Maharaj

Babuji Maharaj
My eyes see nought but thee, Babuji
In my breath they grace,
Words I utter in thy praise,
Babuji.
Thy message I give to solace the weary,
Babuji Maharaj,
My heart overflows with bliss thou bestowed
Babuji Maharaj,
The world fascinates me not,
Call me yogin, call me worldly,
I care not,
Babuji Maharaj,
I crave but thy gift of devotion,
I dance for thee,
I sing for thee,
Thou are my all in all, Babuji.



"Our Duty is to Go on With Faith That He is Always With Us"

LETTERS FROM A BROTHER TO A SISTER

The nine months which, from July 1982 to April 19, 1983, gave birth to the worst fear of any abhyasi in the Mission—the departure of our beloved Babuji Maharaj from his body. As he endured his last agonised time in our world, day by day we waited for news of his progress. Sometimes the news was hopeful, our hopes only to be dashed again when our Master's physical condition did not improve.

With him throughout that sad and anxious time was Parthasarathi, our brother whom Babuji had appointed as His spiritual representative. Our Master and his wife, Sister Sulochana practically lived by Babuji's sick-bed through those trying months. What follows describes what it was like to be so close to our departing Master through those anxious months, letters written by our brother to our sister, Bernadette (Bomhof) Van Steven in Amsterdam.

The Editor

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Camp MADURAI
Wednesday 22/9/82

My dear Sister Bernie,

Such a sweet and loving letter as yours I have rarely received in my life — except from HIM! Thank you very much. I pray for you all, and particularly for Carol, whenever I remember to do so. I know Master will keep you happy and give you speedy progress. May Master Bless you all.

Our travel back to Delhi was just awful. Master was sick at the Orly airport, and vomited twice even before we got into the plane. The flight was 1½ hrs late, and poor, dear Master was getting more and more tired and restless every minute. The 11 hours on the plane up to Delhi was a really miserable time for him. He was mostly unconscious except for the times he had to vomit — which was practically once every 6 or 7 minutes. He never got out of his seat even once till we reached Delhi at noon on 5/9. Two persons had to carry him down the plane, and he was conscious awake only till he got home. Then he went deep into exhausted sleep and did not wake up again till I left for the airport at 5pm to go to the airport to go home to Madras. Later I Confirmed with our Delhi abhyasis that he, with Kashi Ram, left for Shahjahanpur on 5th night.

Now for worst news. On 9th Master became unconscious and was taken to Lucknow and put into the hospital there — he is still there in the intensive care unit! Till 13/9 his condition was quite critical and everyone was naturally very upset and worried. Then on 13th night he regained consciousness and on 14th morning his

doctors said he was now out of danger. I could not go to Lucknow — but I am receiving telephone news every morning and evening. He was, till 20th, receiving only glucose and saline solutions intravenously — no feeding through the mouth at all. Blood urea touched dangerously high level. Anyway, thanks to our Beloved Master, his life is in no danger now. He will have to be in hospital at least for 10 or 12 days more, and I therefore think he will not go to Shahjahanpur before 15/x or so.

Sulochana and I came here on 17/ix and we will be here till 30/9. I am here on Company work. So if at all I go to Shahjahanpur it will be only by end of October. It seems Master's son Sarath, and his grandson Sharad, both returned to Delhi 19/9, heard of Master's illness, and went to Lucknow. Umesh is still in the USA. He is unable to get a return reservation before 1/x, and so will probably reach India only on 2/x — it may not be necessary to go to Shahjahanpur (I mean for Umesh) after that.

So you see, this has been a time of great worry and peace-less-ness. By Master's grace things are improving.

Please ask Carol to do his evening cleaning regularly. He must have the thought that Umesh is also going out with the grasshoppers.

Thank you for your affectionate letter. Our love to all your family — and to little Bombay!!

Lots of Love
from Sulochana

Your affectionate brother
Parthasarathi
(CHARI)

New Delhi
2/X/82

Dear Sister Bernie,

We received your letter a few days ago. Baby ji took ill on 8/9 at Shahjahanpur and was admitted into the hospital at Lucknow the same day. He was there till 2/X and since there was no improvement, he was flown to Delhi and admitted here into the All India Institute of Medical Sciences on the night of 2/X. He has been very very sick and practically unconscious most of the time. On 2 occasions hope was almost lost. Now he is slowly improving though he is still mostly unconscious.

Sulochana and I are here since 2/X — exactly 1 month now — and we are in Master's room on duty the whole day. That is why you could not contact us at Madras. Dr Karl Lutsche came from Augsburg for 4 days and returned home early yesterday morning. His presence was very very necessary and has resulted in a changed line of treatment. Dr Lutsche is hopeful of quick recovery.

Sulochana and I will be here till Master recovers completely. Abhyasis from all over India are coming and going all the time. All are very concerned and deeply worried out of love for Master. Prayer is there all the time for Master's quick and complete recovery.

Please tell all brothers and sisters and convey our love to all.

As I am writing from the hospital, this letter is short. My address is given at the back.

Love to children.

Your affectionate brother
Parthasarathi

With Lots of Love.

Sulochana

New Delhi.
Monday 8/11/82

My Dear Sister Bonnie,

I received your letter dt 24/x via Prof. Harnam Singh. thanks I wrote to you a week ago. I am sure you have received it.

Master's condition does not show any significant change since then. His physical systems are performing normally. His brain is also functioning — as proved by natural breathing and responses to stimuli, but he opens his eyes only very occasionally and of course there is no speech.

Two days ago he had a minor surgical operation when the Trachea was opened at the base of the neck and a tracheal tube inserted as shown in the picture — an operation

called Tracheostomy. It enables the oxygen to be fed through the tube directly into the lungs. Of course the previous tube — the endotracheal tube through the mouth — also achieved this purpose, but as it had to go through the mouth, down the Trachea, there was irritation and also some breathing strain. As a consequence of this operation Master had a mild temperature. His eyes are clearer. We are all praying that he should regain normal conscious soon. Doctors say that patients in such a condition should normally regain full consciousness within the first 2 weeks. After that it becomes more and more difficult as time passes.

So that is the picture of Master's condition this morning as I write this letter from the hospital. 2 months are already over. To-day the third month begins. Poor Master, he is suffering so much, it is unbearable for us who have to be with him. When he becomes fully conscious (he is conscious even now, but not in the sense of doing things voluntarily) then his suffering will naturally increase — therefore we are all eagerly waiting for these signs of suffering in him as indications of the return to normal consciousness.

Yes, Dr Bent Vestergaard was here on the Friday and Saturday when Master's condition was extremely serious, and hope of recovery was almost lost. He is the husband of Lisa Lotte who came to Paris — Bent did not come. Anyway things are better now, and hopes for his full recovery almost sure to be fulfilled. So that's that.

पहला मोड़ FIRST FOLD

At Delhi I can be contacted on phone N. 661753 (Mr Kapoor's house where we are staying). Remember, please, that I have the hours exactly at 8.15 AM (3.45 AM European time) and return only at 8 PM (3.30 PM your time). So I am available only between 8 PM and 10 PM (3.30 PM and 5.30 PM your time) and 6 Am and 8 AM (2.30 AM and 4.30 Am your time.) If you want to speak to me directly you have to phone these three times only.

Hope Karl and the baby are both in good health.

Love to all of you from Srilakshmi + me -

Yes affly
Parthasarathi
(Chari)

New Delhi
Thursday 2/XII/82

My Dear Sister Bernie,

Thank you for your telephone call of this morning. I hope you, baby and Carol are all well. Our best wishes to you all, also to Anne-Marie and our other sisters and brothers.

I do not know when I wrote to you last. Perhaps it was 2 weeks ago. Anne-Marie telephoned me about 5 or 6 days ago, and I gave her the news of that day.

On 21st Master developed sudden bleeding in the neck at 4 PM. There was nearly 300 ml loss of blood in about ½ hour. The doctors changed the tube in the neck the bleeding stopped. That night he was given two bottles of blood. Master became much better. On Monday 22nd he was OK. So also on Tuesday. On Wednesday 24/11, there was some oozing of blood, a little at a time, several times during the day. The doctors said not to worry as this sometimes happened. On Thursday 25/11, the oozing was still light, but more frequent. Suddenly in the evening there was a severe haemorrhage, and blood flowed strongly from both the operation in the neck as well as his mouth. It was frightening to see. An emergency operation became necessary. None of the doctors or the surgeon expected Master to survive the operation, but it had to be done since without it, he would surely have collapsed in a few hours. The blood loss was estimated to be not less than 600-700 ml. Blood transfusion was given immediately, and the operation performed from 9-20 pm to 11 pm that night. It was successful. The surgeons were able to locate two bleeding blood vessels which they tied up. Some minor ulceration in the throat was cauterised. When Sulochana and I were allowed to see him after midnight, he already had his eyes open!! Since then Master's health has been improving steadily. Now, since Tuesday, we are making him sit in a wheel chair and wheeling him around for half an hour or so. Physiotherapy has already been commenced by Sulochana and one nurse about 3 weeks ago. Now a trained physiotherapist — a professional — is coming since yesterday to do a thorough job. We are now hopeful that Master will be well enough to be discharged by the end of December. After that he will have to remain at least for one full month in Delhi so that he can have frequent medical checks here with the same doctors who are now attending upon him. It may even be 2 months as far as I personally can judge. So that Master will certainly be in Delhi at least till end of January '83 and perhaps even longer than that. After that? I don't know

Sulochana and I may have to leave as soon as Master leaves the hospital. There is of course a great deal of work at home — some repairs have also to be attended to. Krishna will come by 6th February I.T. It all depends upon Master. Anyway I expect we can leave at least by 5/2/53. Let us see.

Basant will be celebrated at the centres of the Mission. At Shahjahanpur the Basant will be celebrated by the local abhyasis only. No one is to go to Shahjahanpur for Basant.

Well, that is all for now. Our affection and regards to all.

Yours affly
Parthasarathy.

My Dear Sister Bernadette,

New Delhi
Friday 17/12/82

Thank you for your affectionate letter of the 10th Dec. I think a few days ago Anne-Marie telephoned — and I gave her the news of that day regarding our Great, Beloved and "poor" Baba-ji who has been suffering so much for almost 13 weeks now. Thank God, he is now improving day by day and we are all looking forward to his early discharge from hospital — possibly by 31/12!! Yes, it is too expensive to telephone. Don't do it anymore. It is not necessary — and in any case I think the last crisis has been passed. I will write to you as often as you can.

It is a funny question you have asked, though it is also a very pertinent and intelligent question. When we pray for Master's long life and good health, how does it help Him? It does help, in a very positive and beneficial way, of that there has never been, and can never be, any ~~doubt~~. Do we help by using power? No! I don't think so. Only if power is to be used, then so much could have been used long ago. Also, even if it is Master's power which we are using — and of course it is — how can Master suffer if He is having infinite power in Him? Infinity cannot be reduced, or weakened, even if infinite power is drawn out of it. That, precisely, is the nature of infinity. But all this, while true, is NOT how prayer helps Master. I believe this very deeply, that it is NOT power that is used in prayer. Then what? I believe it is Love! Prayer fails when it is not heartfelt prayer; in other words formal prayer is of no value. Prayer must come from the heart, not the head. In fact I feel that prayer fails because it is generally only formal prayer, done out of a sense of duty, and not out of love for Him for whom we are praying. So it is the love expressed in the form of our longing for the well-being of the Beloved that is prayer. This is how I would define prayer if asked to do so: Prayer is an outpouring of one's love expressed in an anguished longing for the well-being of the Beloved. I don't know if I am correct, but that is how it appears to me.

Master cannot suffer by our meditation. The only thing is, no one should meditate in the same room where Master is — even when he is well. When Master is resting or sleeping, we should not meditate in His physical presence. It is an act of discourtesy and implies bad manners. Baba-ji once wrote to me that such persons are blood-suckers! We should never stop the spiritual practices given to us by Master.

Sulochana and I will be in Delhi for Basant with Master. We plan to leave for Madras on the evening of 20/1/83, reaching Madras on Saturday 22/1/83. When Master leaves the hospital, he will stay at:-

The Principal's Bungalow, College of Vocational Studies 099111
SHEIKH SARAI-Phase II, New Delhi 110017 (Phone: 652264)

पहला मोड़ FIRST FOLD

Sulochana and I will stay there from 2/1/83 till we leave. Any way we will be certainly at Madras on 22/1/83 morning! Krishna will return from USA on 6/2/83 and we must go home. It is already 2½ months that we are in Delhi, and a little more than 1 month more to go!
We are so happy that Master is improving so well now - this morning his doctor said, "He is no longer a patient. He has no illness. only weakness and debility. only rehabilitation is necessary -" We were so happy to hear this — naturally! Yes, we have passed through many trying days and nights, and the 3 or 4 crises that Master has had to endure have been shocking, frightening, and heart-breaking, but by Bhagavan's grace all has been endured by us. We are now eagerly waiting for the day of his discharge. Bhagavan will stay in Delhi for a minimum of 1 month after his discharge — at the address I have given.
our love and best wishes to all of you — from Sulochana Yours affly
Sulochana and I counta from me! With Love. Parthasarathy

New Delhi
Tuesday 18-1-83

My Dear Nita Bennie,

Thank you for telephoning me on Sunday evening. I could feel your sorrow when I told you of Nalini's set-back, and I respect you were crying too.

Nalini was progressing so wonderfully ever since Christmas, and we were taking him to the Rehabilitation ward every day for one hour of special exercises — and, can you imagine it, he was even sitting and pushing bicycle pedals with his feet — something I am sure he has never done in his life before! And suddenly on 16th 9th Jan night he developed a mild fever. Antibiotics, started 24 hours earlier, had to be given. On Monday he was OK, but on Monday night there were problems, and oxygen, discontinued more than 3 weeks ago, had to be started again. On Tuesday, there were no problems during the day, but at night several complications set in all together. His blood pressure started to fluctuate violently, and alarmingly. His pulse became fast, and most alarming of all, his heart beats were — irregular and some beats were missed. Doctors were very worried, since a heart problem, at this stage, could not be tolerated. On Wednesday morning 12/1, doctors said Nalini's condition was critical. You can imagine the worry and the tension here. During these 24 hrs, about six ECG's were taken, and all showed normal heart function — but the BP fluctuation persisted till Wednesday evening, and doctors were in and out of his room all the time. Fortunately, on Wednesday night, his blood pressure became normal and stable, pulse also came down to normal, and everything was well under control on Thursday. On Thursday doctors said his condition was OK and that he was off the danger list. Since then he has been progressing well. Yesterday we sat him up in bed for 1½ hours, and he was conscious, alert, but not responsive. I still have my doubts as to whether he recognises even the persons with him in the room. Of course there are short intervals when he is quite clear, lucid, and not only appears to recognise persons, but also gives one or two-word answers to questions. Of course we still can't hear his voice, but have to make out from the lip-movements. I am glad to say Nalini is now showing signs of quick recovery. I am afraid he will have to remain in hospital at least for 2 or 3 weeks more. This last crisis has unfortunately destroyed the progress made in the 2 weeks before that. We have started his physical exercises again day-before-yesterday, but only in his room. We used to take him out in a wheel chair for 1 hour daily, but that was stopped more than 10 days ago. Sulochana is very sad that even though we have been here for 16 weeks without even a day's rest, we have still to go away, leaving Nalini in the hospital. We would have been so happy, and relieved, if we

Zeit WIG FIRST FOLD

could have seen him discharged from the hospital and in his Delhi home. Now, even at Madras we will have to continue to worry about him — and getting correct information about him will be a big problem too. Well, whatever must be, must be. He will take Master at least 3 to 4 months to sit up in bed by himself. He has to recover full use of his mental powers. All that is still in the future. His illness has lasted already more than 10 months — but the worst is over, and I believe that the greatest suffering is also over. We can only pray and hope for the best.

Dear Bernie, I hope Kamal is getting on well, and the baby is doing fine. Our love to all of you.

Yours affly
Parthasarathy.

P.S. Krishna will reach Madras on 6/7/83 at 11.30 pm at night from Singapore. We are hoping to spend Onasam with Master in the hospital this year.

Madras 25-5-83.

Dear Sister Bernie,

I am grateful to you for your kind letters, and for all the other assistance that you have been offering to me. I am also ashamed that three of your letters are waiting for a reply from me. My apologies for the delay. It is nice of youto speak on the telephone too. It is really nice that we can occasionally hear each others voice! We are all so happy to hear that Carol is improving. May our Beloved Master bless him, and all of you with many many years of healthy and happy life. Thank you for the nice photo of Cehan. He looks quite a big boy now! Regarding my Paris speech you can have a copy from Wom Whitlam - either a cassette or a typescript as you wish. Tom was with us for nearly three weeks, during which I took him around South India and he was able to visit 6 or 7 of our centres too. He quite enjoyed this opportunity. Now he has gone to Bombay from where he will go to Delhi and then to Shahjahanpur, before returning tho Canada.

Yes, the passing away of our beloved Master has been a great shock to all of us. Krishna and I went to Delhi immediately on the 19th and were able to go with Him to Shahjahanpur. We left Delhi at 01.15 on 20th April morning, and reached Shahjahanpur on the morning at 9.15. Master was laid out on the verandah of his home for 24 hours. The funeral was postponed to the 21st. On the 21st morning the mortal remains of our Divine one was taken to the Ashram, laid out in the meditation hall for 2 hours so that all could pay their last respects, and then at 11.30 A.M. the cremation was performed. Nearly 1500 abhyasis had gathered by then. From Europe there were Maly and Karl Gutsche. It was a heart-breaking time. Well, we are still alive, and we have now to carry on with the great and noble work that the Master has left for us to do. May he give us the strength and the courage necessary. You have sent me a photograph for which I do not know how to thank you. It is perhaps the last one of the Master and me together. If you can possibly make for me an enlargement It would be so so nice. Can you?

Thank you for all the printed matter you sent me. It is of great importance that Icontinue to receive such information - for the future of the Mission too it is important. I am grateful to you for this assistance, and am sure that you will help me in the future too!

Sulochana was very sad that she could not have the last darshan of Beloved Babuji. She had to stay at home as Rajaji was here, and Krishna went with me. I had to take Krishna because Babuji had told me, "When Krishna returns to India ask him to come and see me." He could not go earlier for so many reasons, but it was necessary that I obey Master's orders. So I took him. It was the last opportunity for Krishna to see the beloved we have all loved so much and so deeply for do many years. What a sad thing it is that we have now to speak of him in the past tense. I never expected to have to live on this earth without his presence - and now the sad and fearful days are ahead when I have to learn to stand by myself to face lifes challenges and responsibilities. It is all His will. I only pray that He may grant us strength, courage and the ability to love all, which are the essential qualities to lead life nobly and purposefully. Dear sister, I know how sad and desolate you all must be feeling at this sad and irreparable loss. It is a loss greater that the loss of life itself. What is life without the Beloved? But our duty is to go on with faith that He is always with us, courage that he is always guiding us, knowing that He loves us with a love that knows no limitation of space or time. What more to write? Our love and Babujis blessings to all of you.

"Love"
Sulochana.

Your affectionate brother,
Parthasarathi.

(Parthasarathi.)

Dear Sister Bonnie,

Madras 11-7-83

Thank you for your long and affectionate letter of the 25th June which I received about 4 days ago. After having been very busy for 14 yrs (nearly) in Mission administration, I am now quite "idle" for the past 1 year, and Letters help me to feel that I am still participating, in a small way, in something. While Master was with us physically, I had something to hold on to, like the anchor of a ship, and after his Maha Samadhi, I feel quite lost, and without a sense of support and guidance which I have had all these 19 years of my association with our beloved Master's Mission.

Thank you for all your help. Nikhila sent me some enlargements of the photo made by Palle. It is the last picture of Master and me together, and so has a special value for me! Diane is too kind in sending me copies of the French correspondence with translations. I did not go to the working Committee meeting but I had been to Gulbarga where I had long discussions with Brother Raghavendra Rao and served on all matters affecting the future of the Mission. I have had no news yet as to what happened during the meeting yesterday at Shahjahanpur. I may hear something to-day. I hope that matters will be smoothly decided — the future of the Mission must be ensured so that it continues to be what Master wanted it to be, and to function in the Spiritual field with effectiveness and dedication to the uplift of humanity everywhere.

Master once told Srilakshmi, "People only offer me their sorrows and illnesses and things like that, but they never offer to the Master their good health, their pleasures, their happiness and all such things. So success is partial. Everything, good and bad, must be offered humbly to the Master - then as how fast one can progress." So your feeling that everything should be offered to Him is the correct thing. As the Gita it says that even one's Spiritual Progress should be offered to the Master! My heart is so full of sorrow and loneliness that I wonder if I will ever be the same again. Outwardly I am the same. The feeling is of course all "inside."

It is all Master's grace. When I meditate the feeling becomes unbearable, and at most times I weep! I am unable to control my tears. Can you imagine me weeping? No one will believe it, but dear sister, my heart is weeping inside all the time. I pray that this should continue, as it is right that it exists.

Our love to all.

Yours affly

Krishnaprem.

Bernadette Bomhof
Amsterdam

Madras
7-3-84

Dear Sister Bernie,

I am always so very happy when you call, but yesterday yourcall made me quite sad, as I could hear you weeping. I don't want to hear my dear sister ever weeping again. We have the Master, and His Blessings. That is enough for us. What else do we need ? Is there anything else in creation that can give us anything greater that HIS love ? So please never weep again - for anything!

It was in 1972 or 1973 , I don't remember exactly, but I know it was before Master nominated me as His Spiritual Representative. I was in His house in Shahjahanpur - I had been staying with Him for three weeks. One day I was telling him about all the hatred that I have to face ; the bitterness and the hostility. He looked at me and said, "In my vision I see a great lake almost like a sea. Inside it there is one fish swimming. All round the lake there are these birds which catch fish, sitting all around, waiting to catch the fish. The fish is you!" I asked Master that when He saw this in his own vision could He not do something to change it? Master smiled very lovingly and with much compassion. He said, "Parthasarathi ! You want to be me like me in everything, don't you ?" I said that that was my longing. Master then said, "When you want to be like me , then you have to suffer everything that I have suffered." Then He got up and hugged me, patted me on my shoulders, and said, "Don't worry. You will do very good work." So you see, this has all to happen. We should not allow events or persons to destroy our mental equilibrium or our inner equanimity. The inner condition should never be allowed to be disturbed. We must always be alert in this matter. What does it matter what André Poray says ? Of course I am also sad, but not for myself. I am sad for him. It is so sad that a person upon whom Master has done so much work, and upon whom He has lavished so much love, should now turn out to be like this. I do not know how André has got into this state of confusion. It is all desire oriented. There is also the need for power in him. This has been evident to me for the past four years or so. We must pray for him. He is a brother in spirituality, and it is therefore our duty to pray for him.

No man or woman is perfect. We all have our weaknesses. Master has said that an abhyasi should have desire neither for life or for death. We exist at HIS will. But the last one year I find that there is growing in me a longing to leave this miserable world, and to join HIM. This desire is growing. I am trying to throw it out of my system, but when things get really bad, the wish surfaces again. This is my weakness. And you know that there are days when I feel that I cannot go on any more. But somehow the day passes, and another comes, and Master sees to it that the strength to bear it all comes from somewhere. Many ask me when all this will end. Who can say ? It is all in HIS hands. A course of action has evolved, and it must run its course.

We are busy making arrangements for the celebration of Master's 85th Birth Anniversary. We have arranged accomodation in 5 different marriage halls to provide for the anticipated 3000 abhyarthi that I am sure will attend. The accomodation is all over the city,one being near my house;two opposite each each other about 3 KM from my house; and the other two about 10 KM from here. I am glad that Anne Marie will try to attend. I hope to have her with us. I do hope that at least 50 abhyarthi will come from Europe,forgetting the weather and all the other discomforts. Those who have already come and gone cannot come again. It is also pity that Brigitte,Dorit,Geby and a fourth person are coming at the end of this month. But what must be,must be. We are making the arrangements at enormous expense,and I am sure that all our sisters and brothers will whole heartedly participate,and make it a wonderful celebration.

It was good to have Albert with us,though for a very short time. Thanks for the packet of sweets. Please do not keep sending things like this. Also I request you not to spend so much on telephones.

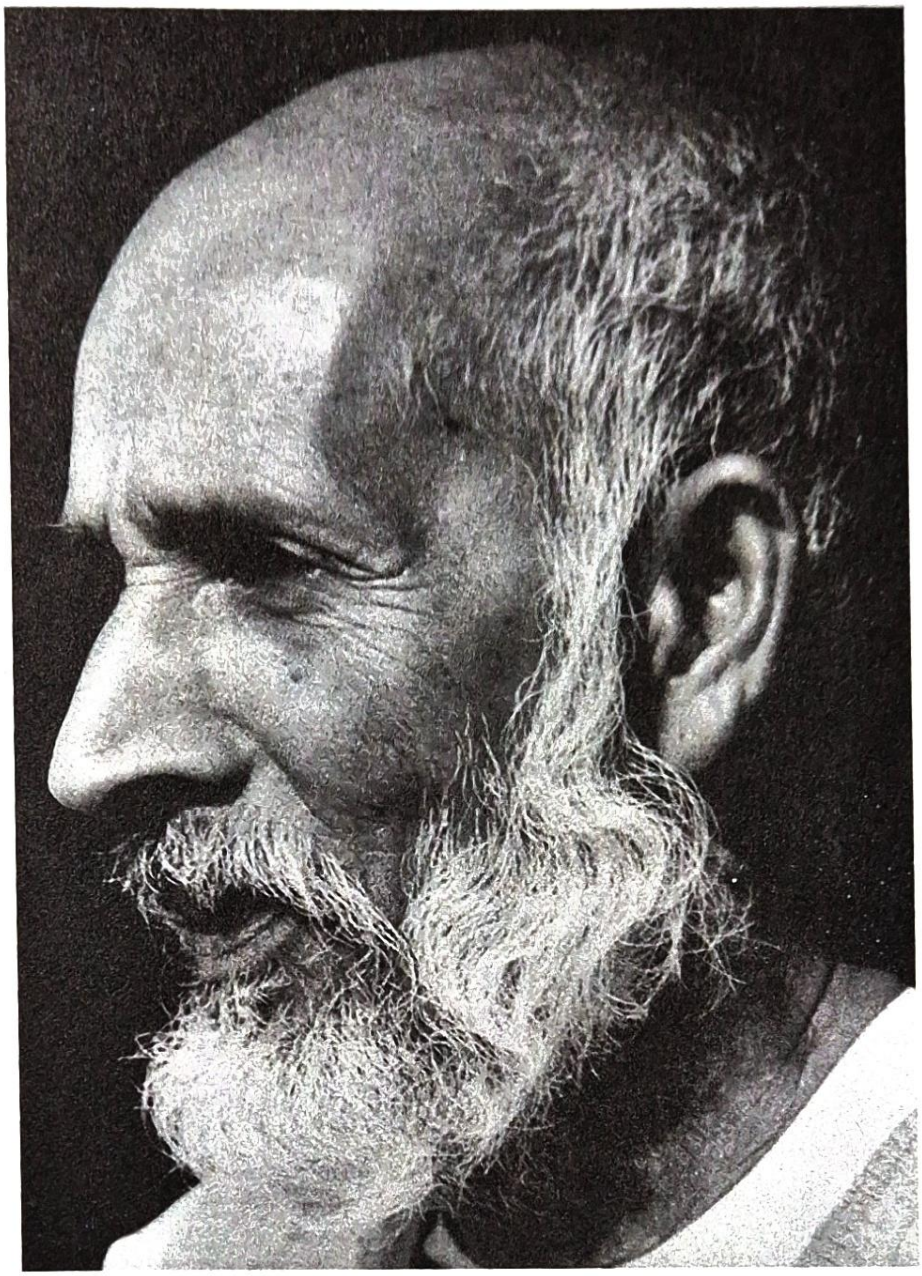
Our love to Sedran and all of you. May Master Bless you in all ways.

Yours affectionately,

Parthasarathi

"That one thing—remembrance—brings everything in its trail. If remembrance is there, take it for granted the remembered one is close to you."

Babuji



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